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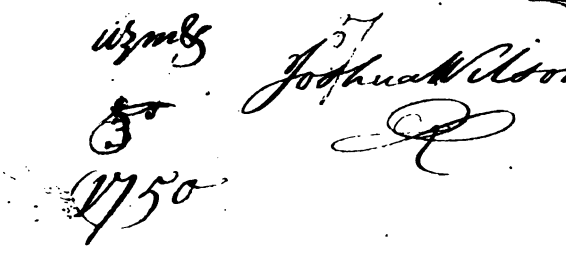

LECTURES ON POETRY

Read in the SCHOOLS of

NATURAL PHILOSOPHY

At *OXFORD*,

By JOSEPH TRAPP, *A. M.*

Fellow of *Wadham-College*, and Reader of the POETICAL LECTURES lately founded in that Univerſity, by HENRY BIRKHEAD LL.D. ſometime Fellow of *All-Souls-College*.

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THE

TRANSLATOR'S *Advertiſement*.

THE following Lectures, being frequently referred to by the Author of them in the Preface and Notes to his Tranſlation of *Virgil*, were thought proper to be communicated to the World in *Engliſh*, that both Works might ſpeak the ſame Language as well as Sentiment, and addreſs themſelves to the ſame Sett of Readers. Whatever Reaſons have been given for tranſlating *Virgil*, and writing an *Engliſh* Comment on him, may be urged in behalf of theſe *Engliſh* Lectures, which as they are an Illuſtration of Poetry in general, ſo are they of *Virgil* in particular.

The Notes to this Edition were chiefly added as it went through the Preſs: In which though I ſometimes differ from my ingenious Author, yet I hope not with greater Freedom than he has taken with others, and will pardon in me. I am well aware how eaſy it is to let ſome Miſtakes ſlip in the Heat of Compoſition: And when theſe had once paſs'd the Preſs, the Author, I ſuppoſe, was not very ſollicitous to re-examine minutely the ſubſequent Editions; ſatisfied with the Approbation he had receiv-ed from that learned Body before whom his Lectures were firſt delivered. An Honour which I ſhall never wiſh to ſee diminiſh'd by any thing I can ſay, or any one elſe: And ſhall now therefore with much greater Pleaſure take this Opportunity of repeating the

following Teſtimony of them from Mr. *Felton's Preface to his Diſſertation on Reading the Claſſics* p. xxi, *&c.*

What a polite Critic may do, if he pleaſes, and in how different an Aſpect Criticiſm appears, when formed by Men of Parts and Fire, we may ſee in the three Volumes of Dr. Trapp's Prælectiones Poeticæ. *A Work that cannot be enough commended, whether we conſider the Curiouſneſs of his Obſervations, the Juſtneſs of his Remarks, the Truth and Importance of his Rules, the Aptneſs and Beauty of his Examples, Force and Elegance of his Style, and the Penetration of his Wit and Judgment: A Piece in ſuch Perfection of Beauty, that he gives the Rules with the ſame Spirit we find in the Examples; and maketh thoſe Diſſertations, which in heavy, formal Hands, would have looked crabbed, dull, and dry, ſhine in all the Graces, that Life, and Eaſe, and Vigour can adorn them with. We ſee how entertaining the ſevereſt Criticiſms are in a Poet's Hand, and what Life and Spirit he can give to the dryeſt Part of his Subject, while he preſcribes the Rules and fixes the Laws of Poetic Diction, weighs the Importance of Words, and conſiders the ſeveral Ways of Expreſſion peculiar to the Poets. And if Men of ſuch Learning and ſuch Parts would undertake this Province, I cannot help repeating it, we ſhould ſee more and more into the Propriety, Strength, and Compaſs, and all the hidden Beauties of the* Greek *and* Latin *Tongues.*

THE

THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

I HAVE no Occaſion to detain the Read with a Preface in Praiſe of Poetry: What thought proper to ſay on that Head, he w find compriſed in the following *Introductory Or tion.* I ſhall only juſt in a few Words lay befo him the Purport of the following Sheets.

Being elected into the Profeſſorſhip by that ven rable Body the Convocation at *Oxford*, I thoug it incumbent on me to diſcharge my Duty in it a cording to the beſt of my Abilities. The better do ſo, I endeavour in the following Lectures keep ſuch a Medium in examining the Sentiments the ſeveral Writers on Poetry that tho' I pay muc Deference to their Authority, yet I don't ſlaviſh adhere to their Decrees. For Books are to be co ſider'd as Helps to Learning, not Fetters to it; a it is juſt, in theſe ſort of Studies eſpecially, th every Man, after he has weigh'd the Opinion others ſhould be at Liberty to follow his own.

This Method I take to be the moſt entertaini and the moſt uſeful both to the Writer and t Reader. No one, I am perſuaded, will ſuſpect purſued it for the ſake of Eaſe; ſince it [illegible] harder to *digeſt* than to *tranſcribe*. And, indee what can be a more arduous Taſk, than to unfo the Nature of Poetry in general, and its differe Species; to explain the various Elegances of Styl and its no leſs various Defects; to explore the ſeçr Turns of the Mind; to weigh the minuteſt *M menta* of Wit; to ſeparate in things of ſo great D licacy, Truth from Falſhood; to ſhew by wh

Springs they delight or raviſh their Readers or Hearers?

I thought proper juſt to ſay ſo much of the Difficulty of the preſent Work, not out of a Deſire of gaining Praiſe, but Pardon; that if I have fallen into any Errors, I may meet with ſome Favour from the Learned. For to their Judgment I ſubmit myſelf, and the Fortunes of this Book; always ready to receive more full Inſtruction, and to retract, not to defend the Miſtakes of it.

But arduous and difficult as theſe Enquiries are, yet not therefore unpleaſant; For it is not to be thought that all Diſcourſes which deliver Rules and Precepts are dry and unentertaining; ſome are no leſs full of Delight than Advantage. Of which ſort is the Subject before us, elegant in its Nature, and agreeable to the Taſte of the moſt Polite; who are never better pleaſed than when they ſcrutiniſe into the Laws of juſt Writing and true Thought, and have the choiceſt Examples of each laid before them. The Mind is charmed with tracing out its own Operations; and while on ſo refined a Subject we read Authors of the ſame Sentiments with ourſelves, we obſerve with ſecret Complacence, ſimilar Ideas ariſe in our Minds; or if we diſſent from a good Writer, we are ready to join in his Praiſe, tho' not in his Opinion: For ſuch an one, tho' he miſſes the Truth, yet deviates with Ingenuity, and is elegant even in his Miſtakes.

The Difficulties then we are ſpeaking of, are ſuch that they don't deter the Admirers of Polite Literature, but invite them: Such as are not attended with Uncouthneſs of Thought or Aſperity of Style; but are like the Labours of Lovers, who, to gain the Goodwill of the Fair, go through the moſt arduous Taſks and ſolicite Dangers.

If the Reader ſhall obſerve in the following Sheets

Sheets some Errors slipt, some Defects either in Thought or Expression, he will at worst have no Reason to complain that I have too importunately loaded him. He will rather wonder perhaps, on the other Hand, how I durst pretend to treat of such Variety of Matter in so few Pages: An Accusation, to which I know not how to give a satisfactory Answer, and which I own I have often been ready to draw up against myself. I can only declare that this has been owing either to Chance, or to the Nature of my Subject, or to my own Inabilities, not to Indolence, for I have omitted nothing which after the most mature Deliberation I thought proper to be taken Notice of. In other respects I own I studied *Brevity* as much as possible, rejecting many things that offer'd, which I judged unentertaining, superfluous, and such as would give the Reader rather Pain than Pleasure; many likewise, which tho' proper Observations in themselves, yet had been abundantly taken Notice of by others, whose Writings I had no Inclination to make so free with, as to purloin.

And this, I hope, will not be imputed to me as an Imperfection. For *Brevity as such* (to use the Language of the Schoolmen) and considered in its own Nature, is by no means a Fault; but rather an Excellence, if we keep clear of those Faults that often adhere to it. If we do Justice to our Subject and are at the same time perspicuous, we cannot be too concise; especially in those Works where we propose to *delight* the Reader, as well as *profit* him.

How far this has been effected in the following Sheets, must be left entirely to his Judgment. I am sure my Endeavour has been not to be wanting to both these Ends, and I might with more *Ease* to myself have wrote a *larger Book*.

To treat of Elegance in an inelegant Manner is a mere Abſurdity; and Conciſeneſs is generally an Attendant of Elegance. Nothing I am ſure can afford more Pleaſure to the Underſtanding than an accurate Enquiry into the Subjects here treated of: Nothing greater Difficulty to a Writer, who is to act the Critic and Philoſopher, rather than the Hiſtorian. Even Metaphyſics do not more try the Mind than Poetry, when we ſearch into the latent Sources of its Beauties and Allurements. But the Pleaſure in the one is much greater than in the other: This has its *Thorns*; but ſuch as grow on the *Roſe*, tender and yielding, that heighten at once its *Sweetneſs* and its *Beauty*.

One Thing I would deſire the Reader to obſerve, that under each Head of Poetry, I have either wholly omitted every thing that is Hiſtorical, or but lightly touch'd upon it: Not becauſe I think by any Means that Part of Learning contemptible; but partly becauſe I find it more ſuitable to my Nature (ſuch as it is) to ſearch into Things than Facts; and partly becauſe others, whoſe Erudition I very much reverence, and to whom I always refer my Reader, have already in this Reſpect, deſerv'd well of the Learned. However, in one or two of my Diſſertations I could not come at the *Nature* of the Subject I treated of without enquiring into the *Hiſtory* of it: as in thoſe upon the *Origin of Poetry in general*, upon *Epigram*, and *Satire*. But even in them to enter into a long Detail of Circumſtances fetch'd from the Writings of the Ancients, wou'd be doing Nothing but what had been done before; which is the Thing I have throughout endeavour'd to avoid. My Aim has been not to be tedious; and for fear I ſhould be ſo now, I ſhall add no more; but leave my Book to ſtand or fall by the Opinion of the Learned.

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ADVER

N. B. *The several Passages cited from* Virgil *are printed in* English *from Dr.* Trapp's *Version. The other Poetical Translations without a Name, the Editor is to be accountable for, tho' he wishes he had as good a Title to the Excellence of two or three of them as he has to the Imperfections of the rest.*

The Notes added to this *English* Edition are distinguish'd thus * or thus †; whereas those that were before in the *Latin* are referr'd to by Letters a b c &c.

ERRATA.

Pag. 3. *l.* 31. *for* our World *r.* their Orbits.
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LECTURES
ON
POETRY, &c.

The ORATION upon entering into the PROFESSORSHIP, or First LECTURE.

LECTURE I.

ALTHO', Gentlemen, I am ſenſible of the Obligation you have laid upon me, by making Choice of me to fill this Office, eſteeming it an Honour to receive Commands, much more Favours from ſo venerable a Body; yet I muſt own myſelf under ſome Concern, when I conſider that I enter into a Province unattempted by others, and wherein I have no Footſteps to guide me. For ſo it has happen'd, that tho' all other Sciences the World can boaſt of, have had their Inſtructors and

Profeſſors in this moſt flouriſhing Univerſity; POETRY alone, neglected, as it were, and overlook'd, has hitherto wanted Schools for her Reception. 'Twas much, indeed, that in the very Seat of the Muſes that Art ſhou'd have found none, which the Muſes eſteem above all others, and claim as their peculiar Property: With You it has always been its Choice to live, and with You it always has liv'd; but has wanted, however, a fix'd Habitation, and (if I may ſpeak more poetically) has wander'd here among other Sciences, as *Delos*, *Apollo*'s native Place, did among the *Ægean* Iſlands, till that excellent Gentleman, whoſe Munificence I now commemorate, like another *Apollo*, fix'd its Situation, and honour'd it with an Eſtabliſhment.

But to omit theſe imaginary Flights, and to repreſent Things without any Colouring, What Thanks are due to him, who has render'd himſelf a perpetual *Mæcenas*, not only to Poets, but to Poetry itſelf; who has beſtow'd Honours upon that Art, which adds the greateſt to whatever is meritorious; who has preſcribed it Laws, and ſecured to it a Patrimony? But ſtill without a Patrimony it had almoſt been, if the reverend and worthy Truſtees[a] of the Muſes Legacy had not to the Patron's Benevolence contributed no ſmall Aſſiſtance of their own, and deſerved little leſs Praiſe by receding from their Due, than the other, by his original Settlement. One of them[b], eſpecially, who, as he is himſelf no ſmall Part of *our* Univerſity, and of *that* venerable Aſſembly, and has an Intercourſe with *both*, makes uſe of it to promote Good-will and Friendſhip mutually between them. How near had the Poetical Revenues been loſt, if they had not been in the

[a] The Dean and Chapter of *Durham*.

[b] The Reverend Dr. *Fitzherbert Adams*, Prebendary of *Durham*.

Hands

Hands of Men therefore the moſt zealous for Learning and the Univerſity, becauſe they were adorned with the *Inſignia* of each? If theſe good Men reject our Praiſes, at leaſt let them permit us to return our Thanks. To the Living, then, we gratefully pay the Tribute of Gratitude; to the Deceaſed, whoſe Gift they augmented, that of Glory.

He well knew that Poetry did not boaſt ſo much of her learned Poverty (noted even to a Proverb) as utterly to reject all Acquiſitions. He knew, moreover, that it was no leſs capable of Rules than other Arts, and no leſs deſerving of them; that it proceeded upon certain Principles, which were founded upon Truth and right Reaſon; that our Maſter *Ariſtotle*, who has accurately treated of the other Sciences, and whoſe Authority we follow in them all, had beſtowed likewiſe ſome of his Pains on this, and has left upon no Subject greater Monuments, either of Extent of Genius, or of Care and Application.

They therefore lie under a great Miſtake, that think Poetry ſuited only to the Theatre, and would have it baniſhed from the Schools, as of too unbounded a Nature to ſubmit to the Regulation of Precept. Rage, indeed, is its Property; but a Rage altogether divine; not deviating from Reaſon, but rendering it more ornamental and ſublime. It may be ſaid, likewiſe, to be a Fire; not like our conſuming ones, but like thoſe of the celeſtial Orbs above, that have not only the Qualities of Heat and Brightneſs, but maintaining one uniform Courſe, are carried round our World at once with equal Swiftneſs and Regularity.

We ſee, then, it is no Abſurdity to have Rules preſcribed to this Art. And what could have been thought of, of ſo delicate and refined a Nature, as the Office of preſcribing them? What more worthy of an Univerſity to accept, or a Courtier to appoint?

A Courtier, I ſay, for in the City he was an Ornament to the Court; as in the Univerſity he was to this Houſe, which has always had the Credit of abounding, and we ſtill have the Comfort of ſeeing it abound with Gentlemen of the moſt diſtinguiſh'd Wit, Birth, and good Manners. I am ſure no Gift could have been more becoming a Friend of the Muſes to beſtow, and he was not only an Admirer, but an Intimate of them; not only a Lover of their Art, but a skilful Practitioner in it; nor could any one ſo properly make Poetry his Heir, as a Poet.

He knew, by Experience, that no Pleaſure was equal to the reading ancient Poets, except that of imitating them. Happy they, that can partake of both; but the former ought to be the Employment of all, that deſire to have any Taſte for Letters, or Politeneſs. Some there are, however, to whom theſe Studies are diſagreeable, and who endeavour to make them ſo to others: This is not owing to any Fault in Poetry, but in themſelves. Formed as they are of coarſe Materials, they have naturally a Diſpoſition either ſlow and frozen, callous and unpolite, or harſh and moroſe; ſo, forſooth, whilſt they would appear grave, as they are, they maliciouſly hate, or ſupercilioufly contemn theſe Exerciſes, as the great Diſturbers of their Peace. They condemn what they know nothing of; and deſpiſe the Pleaſure they want a Capacity to enjoy.

But if at leaſt they pay any Deference to Antiquity (and with theſe Men nothing uſes to be more ſacred, looking upon every Thing with the greater Veneration, the more antient it is) they ought on this Account to allow the Art we are ſpeaking of its due Honours. For not to urge that Poetry is coeval with the World itſelf, and that the Creator may be ſaid in working up and finiſhing his beautiful Poem

of

of the Univerſe, to have performed the Part of a Poet, no leſs than of a Geometrician[c]; it is well known, that thoſe Books have had the greateſt Sanction from Time, that have been dictated by God, or writ by Poets. Thoſe, as it is fit, have the Precedence: But theſe follow at no very great Diſtance.

Nay, why ſhould we make this Difference between the ſacred Writers and Poets, ſince the ſacred Writers were moſt of them Poets; on both Accounts deſervedly called *Vates* (*a Word expreſſing either Character*) and acted by no feigned Inſpiration? That the Devils then, heretofore, uſurping the Title of Gods, gave out their Oracles in Verſe, was owing wholly to their imitating, in this, as well as in other Particulars, the true God, that ſo they might gain Honour and Reverence from their Votaries. If in the Poems of *Job*, and *David*, and the other ſacred Authors, we obſerve the inexpreſſible Sublimity of their Words and Matter; their elegant, and more than human Deſcriptions; the happy Boldneſs of their Metaphors; their ſpiritual Ardour breathing Heaven, and winging the Souls of their Readers up to it, triumphing, as it were, by a royal Authority, over the narrow Rules of mortal Writers, it is impoſſible but we muſt in Tranſport own, that nothing is wanting in them, that might be expected from the Strength of Poetry heighten'd by the Energy of Inſpiration.

If this, then, be the Caſe, who would not wonder at the Ignorance or Baſeneſs of thoſe, who raſhly reproach an Art with Impiety, which has the Honour of being not only pleaſing to God, but taught and dictated by him. 'Tis true, Poetry, as well as Religion, has, by Length of Time, been corrupted with Fables; but this is no more to be imputed to the

[c] It is a known Saying, Ὁ Θεὸς γεωμετρεῖ, *God performs the Office of a Geometrician.*

one than the other; and we can only from hence complain, that by the Depravity of Mankind the beſt of Things are moſt liable to Corruption.

Nor is it any more owing to the Art itſelf, that it is ſometimes polluted by obſcene Writers: To them alone the Infamy redounds: The Chaſtity of Poetry is violated like a Virgin's, and tho' it ſeems to be the Inſtrument of doing an Injury to Virtue, yet Virtue is not more a Sufferer than ſhe is. She acts in her proper Sphere, when, with her native Purity, ſhe diſcovers the true Attractives of Virtue, nor diſguiſes Vice with falſe ones; when ſhe inflames the Mind of Man with the Love of Goodneſs, recounts the Works of the Almighty, and ſets forth all his Praiſes. Undoubtedly, as the divine and ſiſter Sciences, Poetry and Muſic, owe their Origin to Heaven; they love to be employed about heavenly Things; thither they tend by their native Force, and, like Fire, ſeek thoſe bleſſed Abodes from whence they firſt deſcended.

Since Poetry, then, is ſo venerable, both for its Antiquity, and its Religion; they are no leſs to blame, who look upon it as a trifling Amuſement, an Exerciſe for Boys only, or young Men. The Injuſtice of this Calumny is plain from hence, that a good Proficient in this kind of Writing muſt not only excel in Wit, Elegance, and Brightneſs; but muſt be endowed with the matureſt Judgment, and furniſhed with all ſorts of Literature. He muſt, in Truth, turn over the Annals of Time, and Monuments of Hiſtory; he muſt trace the Situation of Countries, underſtand the different Manners of Nations; the Actions and Paſſions of Mankind in general, muſt explore the inmoſt Receſſes of the Mind, and ſecret Avenues to them; ſurvey the whole Syſtem of the Univerſe; in ſhort, make himſelf Maſter of all Nature. Who cannot but ſee and admire the Learning

ing of *Homer* and *Horace*; in *Virgil* eſpecially, his almoſt univerſal Extent of Knowledge in both ſorts of Philoſophy, in Hiſtory, Geography, and the chief of all Science, Mathematicks? In *Lucretius* we ſee how perfectly Natural Philoſophy and Poetry agree; and how properly theſe Schools of ours are appropriated to both: Nor have the ſevereſt Philoſophers Reaſon to complain, that the Company of the one reflects the leaſt Diſhonour on the other.

This I am ſure they have not, if we duly conſider the Nature of this admirable Art; from whence it will appear to contain whatever is great or beautiful in Proſe, and beſides to be diſtinguiſhed by its own proper Ornaments; which it abundantly diſplays, whilſt it pleaſes our Ears, and raviſhes our Souls with its Harmony; whilſt it ſtrongly imprints in our Minds the Images of the Things it repreſents; by a becoming Fiction ſets off Truth to Advantage, and renders it more amiable; and by a decent Liberty keeps thoſe Laws it ſeems to violate.

Another Reaſon of its Contempt, at leaſt of the Abatement of its Eſteem, is, that there are ſuch Numbers of Writers, who give Offence to Men of Learning, by affecting the Title of *Poets*. This is a Fact we are very ſenſible of, and lament: I know not how it is, there's no ſort of Learning to which more apply themſelves, or fewer attain. Innumerable Pretenders there are, who, in ſpite of Genius and Nature, are daily troubling the World with their wretched Performances; who write Verſe often, that ſcarce attempt to write any Thing elſe, and venture upon the moſt difficult of all Studies, that are unfit for any. This profane Mob of Poetaſters are deſervedly to be condemned, that arrogate to themſelves the Credit of a Title, that no ways belongs to them; and which is due only to thoſe who *are of elevated Genius, and Souls divine*. But ſo far is this

from fixing any true Mark of Infamy on our Art, that it ought to redound to its Credit. For in this its native Excellence appears, that it is a Miſtreſs, to whom all by natural Impulſe, as it were, pay their Addreſſes, tho' there are ſo few, upon whom ſhe beſtows her Favours. Thus Wit, Wiſdom, and Religion, have each thoſe amiable Colours, in which all Mankind endeavour to appear.

Nor need we wonder it meets with ſuch Eſteem, ſince it excels all other Sciences, by mixing ſo agreeably *Pleaſure* with *Advantage*. For it is found experimentally true, that by reading the ancient Poets, but eſpecially by imitating them, the Mind is poliſh'd, enlivened, and enlarged; is enriched with a Stock of various Erudition, as well ſacred as profane; with ſuch Plenty of lofty Ideas, and lively Expreſſions, as is no ſmall Addition to the Eloquence of even Proſe itſelf. This no one will deny, that pays any Deference to *Cicero*'s Opinion or Authority; who ingenuouſly tells us he owes no ſmall Aſſiſtance to the Poets, runs out largely in their Praiſes, and ſeems to give them the firſt Place among the Learned. "We are told, ſays he[d], by Men of the great-"eſt Learning, that the Science of all other Things "depends upon Precepts and Art; but a Poet on "Nature alone; that he is formed by the Force of "Genius, and inſpired, as it were, with ſomewhat "of Divinity." This Topick he defends, and expatiates upon, with ſuch Warmth, that Oratory ſeems never to have ſhone out brighter, or to have been more pleaſed with its own Force, than when it was employed in the Praiſe of Poetry.

But farther, it ought by all Means to be encouraged, becauſe it raiſes the Mind to Virtue and Honour, by delivering down the Examples of great Men to Immortality. It not only celebrates He-

[d] Pro Arch. Poeta, c. v.

roes

roes, but makes them; and by lively Copies produces new Originals. What, in ſhort, is it elſe, but the utmoſt Effort of the Mind of Man, that tries all its Nerves, while it infuſes into it a Tincture of univerſal Learning temper'd with the greateſt Sweetneſs. For its Votaries it affects with no ſmall Pleaſure, which its infinite Variety abundantly ſupplies. Oratory, like a River with all its Pomp of Water, confines its Waves within its own Banks; but Poetry, like the Ocean, diffuſes itſelf, by a Variety of Channels, into Rivers, Fountains, and the remoteſt Springs. What can be more delightful, than to take a Survey of Things, Places, and Perſons; what more elegant, than to ſee them repreſented in beautiful Pictures? Who is not charm'd with the humorous Turns of Epigram, the Softneſs of Elegy, the bantering Wit of one ſort of Satire, the Anger of the other, the Keenneſs and Poignancy of both? And yet ſtill more the Ode affects us with its daring Colours, its lofty Conceptions, its Choice of Expreſſion, its agreeable Variety of Numbers, and (what is the diſtinguiſhing Character of the Lyrics) that Luxuriancy of Thought, conducted with the ſevereſt Judgment, by which it now and then expatiates into new Matter, connects Things it ſeem'd to ſeparate, and falls by Chance, as it were, into its firſt Subject. Who is there that does not with Pleaſure ſurvey an Epitome of the World in the Dramatic Poets? The Life, Humours, and Cuſtoms of Mankind repreſented in Comedy; in Tragedy the tumultuous Paſſions of the Great, the Turns of Fortune and wonderful Cataſtrophes, the Puniſhment of Villainy and Rewards of Virtue, and ſometimes the Misfortunes of good Men? Who, I ſay, is not affected with Pleaſure, whether he laughs or weeps with them? For ſuch is the Force of Poetry, that it makes us pleaſed with our Tears, and from Sorrow

extorts Satisfaction. But far beyond all this, is the Epic Poem, that fartheſt Extent of the human Soul, the utmoſt Bounds of Study, and the Pillars, beyond which the Labours of the Mind can never paſs. So abundant is it, that, beſides its own peculiar Excellence, than which nothing can be greater, it comprehends within its Sphere all other Kinds of Poetry whatever; and is in this Art what the Organ is in Muſic, which with various Pipes, inflated with the ſame Breath, charms us not only with its own Harmony, but repreſents that of every other Inſtrument.

Theſe are not Beauties only in Theory; we have Authors that have ſhone in each of theſe Branches of Poetry: Thus *Martial* pleaſes with his tart Facetiouſneſs, *Catullus* with his ſound Wit, tho' his Verſe is ſometimes a little harſh; *Ovid*, *Tibullus*, and *Propertius*, with their Eaſe and Fluency in both. The Man that does not admire the Boldneſs of *Juvenal's* Spirit, the Richneſs of his poetic Vein, and his fearleſs Rage in Satire; may he never love, may he never know the genteel and courtly Turns, the pleaſant Sneers, the ſevere, and yet inviting Precepts of Virtue, the Remarks on common Life made with the greateſt Penetration, Judgment, and Wiſdom, with which the Satires of *Horace*, and eſpecially his Epiſtles, are replete. In this kind of Writing, as we prefer him before all others; ſo in Lyric Poetry he ſtands not only firſt, but alone. With Regard to Comedy, if there were nothing remaining but what *Terence* has left us, *viz.* that Chaſteneſs of Style, that never-failing Fund of Wit and Judgment, that Humour clear of vulgar Jeſts, thoſe beautiful Images of Mankind and Nature, that exquiſite Artifice in working up Plots, and unfolding them; we ſhould ever have Reaſon to praiſe the Art and the Poet. If Tragedy has receiv'd but ſmall Ornaments from the *Latin* Writers, as far as they have come to our Hands;

Hands; by the *Greeks* that Loſs has been abundantly compenſated. Witneſs the Thunder and Vigour of *Sophocles*, the Grandeur and ſententious Gravity of *Euripides*, the Art of both, with which they command the Affections of their Readers, and call forth Pity or Terror at Pleaſure.

The Nature and Limits of this Diſcourſe will not allow me even to touch upon the Characters of all the other *Greek* and *Latin* Writers that have excell'd in the ſeveral Species of Poetry. One, however, it would be unpardonable to omit, who as he is the greateſt of all (not *Homer* himſelf excepted) may not improperly bring up the Rear of this ſhining Hoſt, the immortal *Virgil*, I mean, beyond all Praiſes, in all Reſpects compleat. Who is not in Love with the plain and unaffected Beauty of his Eclogues, the finiſh'd and chaſte Elegance of his *Georgics*, and in them the entertaining Deſcriptions with which they abound, with the Variety of their Expreſſions, the Uſefulneſs of their Precepts in Husbandry, and their noble Excurſions, upon every proper Occaſion, into Subjects of a ſublimer Nature? But the divine *Æneid* who can turn over without Tranſport, without being loſt, as it were, in a happy Mixture of Joy and Wonder? Who can help being aſtoniſh'd at that Fire of Imagination temper'd with ſo cool a Judgment, ſuch Strength united with ſo much Beauty? To nothing this Work can with Juſtice be compar'd, unleſs to that, whoſe Duration will have the ſame Period, the great Machine of the Univerſe. For where ſhall we find, in any human Compoſition, ſo exact a Harmony between the ſeveral Parts, and ſo much Beauty in each of them; ſuch an infinite Fecundity of Matter, without the leaſt Exuberance of Style, or Crowding of Incidents? It would be an endleſs Attempt to recount the different Images of Heroes, and other Perſonages that appear

up and down in it, the Variety of Manners, the Conflict of Paſſions, almoſt every Object of the Imagination beautifully deſcribed, all Nature unfolded, the great Events, the unexpected Revolutions, the Incentives to Virtue; in the ſeveral Speeches the moſt finiſh'd Eloquence; in the Thoughts and Expreſſions the ſublimeſt Majeſty; in ſhort, the moſt conſummate Art, by which all theſe Things are brought into one uniform Piece?

After the mention of *Virgil* and thoſe other great Names, Silence only ſhould enſue; but that our Oration naturally addreſſes itſelf to him, to whoſe Indulgence this Liberty of ſpeaking in the Praiſe of *Virgil*, and thoſe other great Names, is owing; our moſt worthy Vicechancellor*, I mean, who has brought to Light this Poetic Legacy, which had been buried, as it were, for many Years in Oblivion, and has at length placed it upon a Foundation that will make it perpetual. Such Attainments, Sir, have you made in your Study of the publick Welfare! 'tis thus you make us ſenſible that none are ſo faithful and diligent Diſpenſers of others Bounty, as the Bountiful! I ſhall not enter into a Detail of the other Virtues, that make up your Character: My Buſineſs was to mention that only which relates to our preſent Function: Permit us, however, to wiſh you Length of Days in this World, that ſuch Thanks may in Time be due to you, as may exceed the Power of Poetry itſelf to pay.

* The Reverend Dr. *William Lancaſter*, S. T. P. Head of *Queen's-College*, and at that Time Vice-chancellor of *Oxford*.

LECTURE II, and III.

Of the Nature and Origin of Poetry in general.

BEFORE we enter upon the different Branches of the Art we propoſe to treat of, it may not be improper to clear our Way, by giving, as the Schoolmen ſpeak, a general Idea of it, and laying before you a comprehenſive View of whatever is common to all its Parts. None, that I know of, has given a juſt Definition of it; not *Ariſtotle* himſelf, tho' a perfect Maſter in *Definitions:* And yet there's nothing in the Subject repugnant to one. To be ſhort, then, Poetry ſeems in general, *An Art of imitating, or illuſtrating in metrical Numbers every Being in Nature, and every Object of the Imagination, for the Delight and Improvement of Mankind.*

Voſſius's Definition [f] (I ſpeak it with humble Deference to ſo great a Man) to me is by no means ſatisfactory, who makes Poetry conſiſt in being *An Art of repreſenting Actions in Metre.* This Definition falls too ſhort, and is not comprehenſive enough of the Nature of the Thing defined. For I would ask, is it not the Buſineſs of Poetry to repreſent every Thing that is capable of being repreſented? And are Actions the only Things capable of being repreſented? This, indeed, is expreſly

[f] Voſſ. de Art. Poet. &c. p. 21.

aſſerted

asserted by *Dacier*, the *French* Interpreter of *Aristotle:* But to any one that considers the Passage, it will abundantly appear, that this Opinion cannot be drawn from *Aristotle* by a just Interpretation of him. That great Philosopher, and Prince of Critics, says, that *Imitators imitate Actions.* Now, can any one, without violating all the Rules of Reasoning this Philosopher has taught, conclude from hence that Actions *alone* are capable of being imitated? He indeed says, or rather the *French* Version is made to say, that ALL *that imitate, imitate Actions*; but in his own Original he says no such Thing; the Word ALL is added by the Interpreter: His Words are[g], μιμεῖσθαι οἱ μιμούμενοι πράττοντας, i. e. *Imitators imitate Actions.*

But if the Version were true, the Conclusion drawn from it would, however, be false. For *All* Imitators may imitate Actions, and yet possibly not *Actions only.* But there's no need of many Words to prove *Aristotle's* Authority unjustly alledged for this Proposition; since he tells us himself, a little before the Passage above cited[h], μιμεῖσθαι καὶ ἤθη καὶ πάθη καὶ πράξεις, i. e. *they imitate Manners, Passions, and Actions.* He thought therefore that not only Actions, but Manners and Affections, were capable of being imitated. It is certain, if by Imitation is meant that which impresses upon the Mind a true and genuine Representation of any Thing, it will be no less repugnant to common Sense than to *Aristotle's*, to affirm that nothing but Actions can be imitated. For, besides them, we see Passions, Things, Places, and Men are imitated, not only by Poets, but by Painters too. This *Horace*, the best Interpreter of *Aristotle*, sufficiently intimates, when he uses the Word *imitari* in the same Sense with *describere, pingere*, or *sculpere:*

[g] Περὶ ποιητικῆς, cap. 2. [h] cap. 1.

Molles

Molles imitabitur ære capillos [1]
In Braſs ſhall imitate the waving Hair.

Beſides, *Voſſius*'s Definition is ſhort in another Reſpect; as it makes the Object of Imitation too narrow, ſo it makes the Eſſence of Poetry conſiſt *ſolely in Imitation*; whereas there are ſome Kinds of it that have little to do with Imitation, but much in Illuſtration; as we ſhall ſhew in the Sequel.

That Poetry is an *Art*, is ſufficiently plain, and we have no Occaſion to uſe many Words to prove it. It obſerves certain Laws and Rules, is brought to the Teſt of right Reaſon, and, laſtly, it aims at ſome particular End. I cannot but wonder, therefore, why thoſe that fix'd the Number of the Liberal Arts, as they are commonly reckon'd up, ſhould have allowed no Place for Poetry and Oratory among them. They were thought, perhaps, reducible partly to Rhetorick, and partly to Grammar. But this, I think, they are not, with any Propriety. For, not to obſerve that Poetry and Oratory are in their Merit too good, and in their Extent too great to be included in other Sciences, the Buſineſs of Rhetorick is wholly to poliſh the Style of both of them; and, by the Way, as it is now-a-days managed, tends more, perhaps, to the Detriment and Corruption, than the Credit and Honour of either; but is fully and profeſſedly concerned in neither. As to Grammar, they can no more be reduced to that, than all other Sciences whatever; for to all Sciences Words, whether written or ſpoken, are ſubſervient. Well, then, *Voſſius* and all agree that Poetry is an *Art*, tho' that great Man has not ſufficiently ſhewn the peculiar Buſineſs of it.

The Definition we have given above, ſeems to be full, and every Way compleat, inaſmuch as it com-

[1] De Art. Poet. V. 33.

prehends

prehends the whole Nature of Poetry, *is* applicable only to Poetry, and all the Species of it; for all of them are always concern'd, either in Imitation, or Illuſtration, or both at once. Between theſe two there is ſome Difference; for he that beautifully imitates any Thing, always illuſtrates it; but not on the contrary; the Rule does not hold *vice verſa*. Thoſe Things that relate to Science, and Diſcipline, ſuch as the Ideas of the Mind, Virtues, Vices, Manners, and the like, are *illuſtrated* by being explained; but no one will ſay, that by being explained they are *imitated*. But, as I ſaid, it is an undoubted Maxim, that all Kinds of Poetry are employed one or other of theſe Ways, or both. In Deſcriptions of whatever Kind, in moving the Paſſions, in Panegyric, in Satire, in Heroics, in Ethics, the Poet either imitates or illuſtrates ſomething, or does both; unleſs, perhaps, we ought to except the Writers of thoſe ſhort Sentences, that are mere *moral Sayings*; ſuch as *Pythagoras*, *Phocyllides*, and the like; who may be ſaid, indeed, to write Verſes, but not Poems: They want the Force, the Elegance, the Style, and peculiar Turn of Thought that diſcriminates Poets from other Writers. 'Tis plain, then, the Buſineſs of Poets is either Imitation or Illuſtration; and that, not only of Actions, but, as we preſumed to lay down in our Definition, of every Being in Nature, or in the Imagination. The Object, then, of Poetry, muſt be enlarged, and thoſe Bounds extended, that *Voſſius* preſcribed to it: For is there any Thing in the real or ideal World, not capable of being deſcribed or illuſtrated? any Thing which the capacious Stretch of Poetry will not comprehend?

And ſince it chiefly conſiſts in Imitation, it may not be amiſs, perhaps, to make a ſhort Compariſon between that and Painting. All Poetry will not admit of this Compariſon, but ſuch only as conſiſts in De-

Deſcription; upon which whatever is in common between them, depends. Painting, as well as Poetry affects the Paſſions; That by Deſcription alone, This by other adventitious Arts. I would here, however, particularly obſerve, that Poetry conſiſts much more in Deſcription, than is generally imagined. For, beſides thoſe longer and ſet Deſcriptions of Things, Places, and Perſons, there are numberleſs others, unobſerved by common Readers, contained in one Verſe, ſometimes in one Word, to which the whole Beauty of the Thought is owing; and which wonderfully affect us, for no other Reaſon but becauſe they are Deſcriptions, that is, impreſs a lively Image of ſomewhat upon the Mind. To this it is, that metaphorical Expreſſions, when ſelected with Judgment, owe their Beauty, and their Elegance; every Metaphor being a ſhort Deſcription.

But to return to our Compariſon between Painting and Poetry. They both agree, in repreſenting to the Mind Images of Things, and ought both of them to be govern'd by Nature and Probability. So near is their Affinity, that by a very natural and common Metaphor, Poetry is ſaid to paint Things, Painting to deſcribe them. Both give us *Draughts* of the Body, as well as the Soul; but with this Difference, that the former is chiefly expreſſed by Painting, the latter by Poetry. It cannot be denied, but that the Lines of a Face are much more ſtrongly diſtinguiſh'd by Light and Shade, than by any Colouring of Words, tho' ever ſo elegant, or well choſen: Add, moreover, that the Attitudes, the various Poſitions and Geſtures of the Body, the confuſed Rout and Tumult of a Battle, the Gloomineſs or Brightneſs of a Landſcape, the Proſpect of a Building, and the like, are repreſented to much greater Perfection by Painters, than Poets; tho', in theſe Particulars, Deſcription approaches nearer to Painting

ing than in Portraitures. The Reaſon of theſe Advantages of the Painter's over the Poet's Art, is obvious; for as the Things repreſented are the Objects of the Senſes, to the Senſes Painting exhibits the Images of them, as well as to the Imagination, and that according to the exacteſt Rules of Optics and Proportion: Whereas the Poet can only apply to the inward Faculties of the Soul, by the fainter Helps of Words and Sound, of Memory and Recollection. In Verſe, indeed, we find theſe Things wonderfully deſcribed, and every Way agreeably to Nature; and tho' it is impoſſible for Words to repreſent them to the Mind, as graphically as Colours do to the Eyes; yet perhaps leſs Genius is required in the one than in the other. But the inward Springs and Movements of the Soul, the Actions, Paſſions, Manners, the diſtinguiſhing Tempers and Natures of Men, are drawn with much more Accuracy by the Poet, than the Painter. The one can imitate only ſo much of the Paſſions, as appears in the outward Man, in his Countenance, and Geſture; the other fetches them from the inmoſt Receſſes of the Heart, deſcribes them as they lurk there, without Diſguiſe, in all their genuine Conflicts. The Repreſentation we ſee of theſe, even in Painting (as far as Colours can repreſent them) is exquiſite, even to Admiration; but, upon the whole, after a fair Compariſon between the two Arts, Poetry excels Painting as much as the Soul does the Body, that being beſt repreſented by the former, as this is by the latter.

Poetry, then, being a ſort of *Imitation*, thoſe that practiſe the Art are not called Ποιηταὶ, *Makers**, from *creating*;

* Ποιέω, in the *Doric* and *Æolic* Dialects is writ ποάω, whence Ποητὴς, *Poeta*. See *Chiſhull's Inſcript. Sigea*, § ult. A *Maker* in our own Language under Queen *Elizabeth*, was the common Appellation for a Poet, agreeably to

creating; as if it was their peculiar Province to produce, out of nothing, new Matter for their Subject: So far is this from being true, that they propose always to copy Nature. But this Appellation is given them by way of Eminence, as their Thoughts are more exercised in *Invention*, and *forming* Ideas, than any other Writer's; as such Symmetry and Harmony is required in their Compositions; and such Artifice in their Fictions (for they not only adorn their Subject, but generally make it) and, lastly, such Management and Pains in working up the Machines of their Poem, and conducting the several Parts of it, so as to make them all conspire to one uniform Action. In this last Particular Poets remarkably excel other Writers, as all that are versed in them are sensible. But among those that are honoured with the Title of Poets, and are such, all have not an equal Claim to it. To the Epic and Dramatic Writers it is more peculiarly applicable; to the rest, only, as we term it, by Analogy. Their Business is Invention, as well as Disposition; the rest have little to do with the one, much less with the other. So that there are not only different Degrees of Poets, and subordinate Honours; but some who are called so only in an improper Sense: For who would mention *Martial* and *Virgil* under the same Predicament?

We said above, that Poetry consisted of *metrical Numbers*: This is a necessary Part of the Definition, as being the very Essence of Poetry, properly so called; and tho', as we observed, there may be Verses without a Poem, there can't be a Poem without Verses. I am obliged, therefore, once more to dissent from Monsieur *Dacier*; who, not, indeed, without the Authority of others, maintains[k], that those

to the *Greeks*, with whom, likewise, the Verb ποιέω simply signified to *make Verses*. See *Taylor's Lysias*, Ed. 4to, p. 27.

[k] In Aristot. Poet. c. 1.

fabulous

fabulous Narratives in Proſe, of *Lucian*, *Heliodorus*, and the like, among the Ancients, and of many others among the Moderns, that are held in ſo great Eſteem, in *France*, particularly, and *Spain*, are Poems. I readily own ſome of them are truly elegant, and give us ample Teſtimonies of the Authors Wit and Judgment; nay, and except their want of Verſe, are very little different from Epic Poems. But if even *Homer's Ilias*, or *Virgil's Æneis*, were to be ſtript of their Metre, they would no longer be looked upon as Poems; if we may judge of the Nature of a Poem from the general Conſent of Writers, who always take it for granted that Verſe is an eſſential Property of it.

Thoſe who are of the other Opinion, think they are ſupported by no leſs Authority than *Ariſtotle's*; who aſſerts ἡ ἱστοποιία τὸ conſiſt μόνον τοῖς ψιλοῖς λόγοις, ἢ τοῖς μέλεσι. The forementiond learned Writer inſiſts, that ψιλοῖς λόγοις can ſignify nothing elſe but plain Proſe; that therefore *Ariſtotle* admitted ſome ſort of Epic Poem without Metre. Others, that take the contrary Side, endeavour to ſhew, that by ψιλοῖς λόγοις is to be underſtood a poetical Diſcourſe, not without Metre, but without *Harmony* and *Rhythm*; by which *Ariſtotle* meant Muſic, and Meaſures which they uſed to dance to. So that, according to theſe Interpreters, the Particle ἢ is not *disjunctive* in this Place, but *explanatory*. They that would ſee the Arguments in Defence of this Expoſition, may conſult *Voſſius*[1]. But if we grant our Opponents what they deſire, *viz.* that *Ariſtotle* meant only Proſe by ψιλοῖς λόγοις, as indeed it is moſt probable he did; yet it will not follow that he reckoned ſuch fictitious Narratives, as we are now ſpeaking of, or indeed any kind of Proſe whatever, to be a Species of Poetry. To make this plain, we muſt enquire into the

[1] De Art. Poet. p. 7, 8.

genuine

genuine Senſe of the other Word ἱστορία. Here the *French* Interpreter ſuppoſes, without any Heſitation, that it ſignifies nothing elſe but an Epic Poem, or the Art of making it. But *Voſſius* proves, to a Demonſtration, that it muſt have a larger Senſe, ſo as to include the Epic Poem, and that kind of Fable without Metre, which is the Subject of our preſent Debate. The Meaning, then, of *Ariſtotle*, is this, that the *Epopœia* is the *Genus*, one Species of which is the *Epic* Poem; the other, the *Novel*, or Fable in Proſe. Upon this View, then, we ſee, that granting ψιλοῖς λόγοις, in *Ariſtotle*, to denote only Proſe; yet it can't from thence be concluded, that theſe fictitious Narratives, or any kind of Proſe, can be brought under the Head of Poetry. To the *Epopœia* they truly belong, and to nothing elſe.

Metre, then, we'll conclude to be an eſſential Part of Poetry. Another Queſtion ariſes, whether *Fiction* is likewiſe ſo. Some tell us, that no one ſhould be entitled a Poet, but he that invents ſome Fable, and heightens it with the Decoration of Verſe. To this Opinion I can by no means aſſent. The firſt Writers of Verſes, no doubt, made them in Praiſe of ſomewhat that was real, and before them. For it is highly probable, that this Art, as moſt others, was in its Infancy employ'd about Things that were moſt obvious, and eaſy to the Learner. Now it is certainly more eaſy to deſcribe a Subject that already exiſts, than to form a new one. *Voſſius*[m] thinks, that Love was the firſt Occaſion of Poetry. Which is not improbable, conſidering that this Affection is coeval with Mankind, is univerſal, and naturally productive of Poetry. True Love, then, or ſomewhat true, was the Poets firſt Theme; afterwards, by Length of Time, they roſe to Things that were more difficult, and blended artful Devices and

[m] P. 13.

Truth

Truth together. So that Poetry was before Fiction; and even ſince they have been united, there have been many Poets, truly ſo called, who have had to do with Fiction. Thoſe that exerciſe that Talent with Art, are Poets in a more peculiar Manner, and of a ſuperior Genius. But if thoſe only were to be honour'd with the Title, the Number of them would be very ſmall. To all, therefore, it ought to extend, who, tho' they *invent* nothing, yet *illuſtrate* their Subject with Metre, animated with the Style and Spirit of Poetry.

I cannot, therefore, ſufficiently wonder that the great *Scaliger* [n] ſhould aſſert, there was no Difference between Poetry and Hiſtory, except in the *Diction*. 'Tis certain he could not mean Poetry in general; for there are many Sorts of it, which are ſo totally different from Hiſtory, that they have ſcarce any Thing in common with it. Even the Epic Poem, tho' it conſiſts much in Narration, yet is diſtinguiſh'd enough from Hiſtory, by the ſubject Matter, by the Diſpoſal of the Parts, and many other Criterions. *Scaliger*'s Opinion may ſeem true in reſpect of one kind of Poetry only, ſuch as that of *Lucan*, which is properly call'd an Hiſtorical Poem: Tho' this may be heighten'd with that poetic Rage and Fire, which, I preſume, is ſomewhat more than *Diction*, and incompatible with Hiſtory.

Tho' we generally uſe the Words *Poeſis* and *Poetica*, *Poeſy* and *Poetry*, indiſcriminately; yet, if we would ſpeak properly, they ought to be diſtinguiſh'd. By a *Poem* (a third Word, that often occurs in this ſort of Diſſertations) is meant the Work of the Poet; by *Poeſy*, the actual Exerciſe; by *Poetry*, the Art or Habit.

And ſince Harmony and Sonorouſneſs are ſo neceſſary a Part of Poetry, it may not be foreign to

[n] See Voſſ. de Art. Poet. p. 11.

our

our Purpoſe to compare it with Muſic; eſpecially as theſe two entertaining Arts are not only nearly allied in their Nature, but in Fact alſo, often united: This we ſee, eſpecially in Odes and Songs, and the Entertainments of the Theatre; where Poeſy and Muſic lend each other their friendly Aid, become joint Aſſociates, and both conſpire to captivate their Hearers. In this, alſo, they farther agree, that they have both the ſame Admirers. I ſpeak of ſuch as have made a Progreſs in Letters; for we often meet not only with Lovers of Muſic, but Maſters in it, that, for want of Learning, have no Taſte for the Pleaſures of Poetry. But among thoſe that are advanced in Literature, an Admirer of one of theſe Arts, loves the other alſo; and he that underſtands one, has a Knowledge in both, or deſires and wiſhes for it. From hence it was, no doubt, that the Ancients made the ſame *Apollo* the Patron of Poetry and Muſic, and attributed to the Muſes the divineſt Melody, adorning them with the Enſigns of the Harp, and other muſical Inſtruments. *Ariſtotle*, likewiſe, ſeems to have comprehended Muſic under Poetry; and tho' that may not be altogether ſo proper, ſince Muſic conſiſts of Sound only, without Words, yet it is plain the Affinity between them is very great. Both charm the Ear with ſonorous Meaſures; Muſic, indeed, in a higher Degree, but Poetry comes much nearer to it in this Reſpect, than Proſe, how flowing or tuneable ſoever.

Both turn more particularly upon the Harmony of the Parts, and the proper Diſpoſal of them; both ſuited to Men of the politeſt Taſte, and both improve it. In ſhort, ſo nearly are they the ſame, that the Word *Singing* is equally applied to both. But this Difference there is, that Poetry is much the more excellent in its kind; becauſe the whole Circle of Learning enters into its Compoſition; it applies

plies itſelf more particularly to the Soul, as the other to the Senſes; and, laſtly, the Advantages of it to Mankind are abundantly greater.

From hence I am naturally led to enquire into the Uſe and End of Poetry, which is generally reckoned twofold, *viz.* to *inſtruct* and to *pleaſe*. So that we come now to the laſt Branch of our Definition, wherein we aſſerted, that Poetry was deſign'd *for the Pleaſure and Improvement of Mankind*, according to that well known Saying of *Horace*,

Aut prodeſſe volunt, aut delectare Poetæ.[*]

A Poet ſhou'd inſtruct, or pleaſe, or both. *Roſcom.*

It is agreed, then, by all, that this is the twofold End of Poetry; but which the principal, is ſtill a Doubt. It may bear a Diſpute, indeed, which is in *Fact* the principal; but which *ought* to be ſo, ſurely can be none: For in this, as in all other Arts, the Advantage ought to be conſidered before the Pleaſure. Some, indeed, of our modern Writers, think otherwiſe; and boldly pronounce Pleaſure to be the chief End of Poetry. It can't be denied, but this Opinion is perfectly conſonant to their Writings; in which they not only principally conſult their Reader's Pleaſure, but in Oppoſition to their Advantage. Witneſs thoſe lewd Poems with which this divine Art is polluted. But if we would conſult Reaſon, we ſhould allow that even in Verſe what improves us, ought to be more regarded than what delights us. I own, the ſevereſt Wits, that lay down the moſt rigid Precepts of Virtue, ought to have a View to Pleaſure in their Compoſitions; for it is the diſtinguiſhing Mark of the Poet from the Philoſopher, that tho' Virtue is the Aim of both, yet the one preſſes it cloſer, indeed, but in a leſs engaging Manner. In the dry Method of a Teacher he defines his Subject, he explains

[*] De Art. Poet. v. 333.

his

his Terms, and then gives you Rules; the other cloaths his Precepts in Examples, and imperceptibly insinuates them under the beautiful Disguise of Narration. I own, likewise, that Readers are generally more sensible of the Pleasure they receive, than the Profit, even when it is less proposed by the Writers; for it is That makes the strongest Impression upon the Imagination: Nay, and I grant, that this is what Writers themselves ought to study. Yet notwithstanding all this, Profit may be the chief End of Poetry, and ought to be so; but for that very Reason Pleasure should be joined to it, and accompany it, as a Handmaid, to minister to its Occasions. When Children are allured with the sweeten'd Draught, or gilded Pill, they, as the Physician intended, consider nothing but the Beauty of the one, or the Taste of the other: But it is well known, this was not the *chief* Intent of the Physician in his Prescription.

This Rule relates principally to the more perfect and sublimer Kinds of Poetry, and especially the Epic and Dramatic. For we don't pretend that Epigram, Elegy, Songs, and the like, conduce much to the Improvement of Virtue. It is enough, if these Writings keep within the Bounds of Chastity, and give no Offence to Good-manners. Poets sometimes write, not so much to move others Passions, as to indulge their own. And as Pleasure is the chief, or, perhaps, the only *Effect* of this sort of Levities, so it may very innocently be proposed by Authors as the chief *End* of them. Tho' even from these lesser Flights one Advantage arises, that they improve the Wit, and polish the Style, both of the Writer and the Reader; a Circumstance that may be observed in Favour of all Kinds of Poetry.

If it be asked, What are those inward Sensations of Pleasure with which Poetry affects us, or from whence

it is Mankind are ſo highly delighted with that Way of Writing; I anſwer, this may in ſome Meaſure be collected from what has been already ſaid, and farther, from what we ſhall have Occaſion to ſay hereafter under the ſubject Matter of Poetry. At preſent let the following Conſiderations ſuffice: It is obvious enough why Harmony of Verſe ſhould pleaſe us, ſince that's a Pleaſure that ariſes from a proper Diſpoſition of Sounds, which make their Way directly to the Senſes. But ſtill we feel a much higher, from the Images of Things beautifully painted, and ſtrongly impreſſed upon the Mind. As we are naturally deſirous of Truth, we are glad to find our Ideas confirmed by thoſe of others; for from thence we conclude ours are juſt, and agreeable to Nature. This Aſſimilation of Ideas is ſtill more pleaſant, when it ariſes from ſome ſudden unforeſeen Impreſſion; for all Impreſſions upon the Mind, whether of Joy or Grief, are more affecting, the ſwifter they are made, and the more unexpected; the ſlower they are, the more languid. This is confirmed no leſs by Experience, than Reaſon. Since the Impreſſions, then, of Poetry, are of the vehement kind, it is no Wonder ſo much Pleaſure ſhould attend them, eſpecially when the Ideas we ſpeak of are heighten'd with all the Elegance of Expreſſion. This Pleaſure is likewiſe in ſome Meaſure to be attributed to the natural Love of Mankind for Imitation, the Reaſon of which we ſhall attempt to give in its proper Place. From theſe Principles we may account for the Pleaſure that ariſes from Deſcription, as well as that from Fiction.

The Pleaſure we receive from the Variety of Thought, and ſudden Tranſitions in Poetry, ſeems owing to our natural Love of Novelty; for ſo imperfect is the Happineſs of us Mortals, that every Thing

Thing by Conſtancy grows nauſeous and inſipid to us.

With Regard to the Paſſions, why ſome of them ſhould give us greater Pleaſure, the more they are put in Motion, is plain; but how Delight ſhould flow from Pity, Terror, and even Sorrow itſelf, ſeems truly wonderful, and difficult to account for. And, indeed, to do Juſtice to this Queſtion, we ought to know the ſecret Springs of the Soul, and to lay open the Foundations of human Happineſs and Miſery: Which, becauſe it will require a diſtinct Diſſertation, we ſhall paſs by, at preſent; reſerving it for a more full Enquiry, when we come to treat more particularly of the Nature of Tragedy.

We have already, in a few Words, ſhewn, wherein the Advantages of Poetry conſiſt; no one can be a Stranger to them: This Art will receive no leſs Honour, if we look back into its Antiquity. If it took its Riſe from Love, (the Opinion, which, in Conformity with *Voſſius*, we have above propoſed as moſt probable) yet to Religion it owes its Increaſe and Progreſs; and it may be queſtion'd, which of the two is its true Parent. *Dacier* calls it the Offspring of Religion; and it is certain, in the earlieſt Ages of the World it was uſual to ſing Hymns to the Honour of God upon the ſolemn Feſtivals; upon thoſe eſpecially, when after the In-gathering of Harveſt they offer'd up to him the Firſt-fruits, and prais'd him for the Bleſſings they were now in Poſſeſſion of. In Courſe of Time, Poetry, which had hitherto depended wholly upon Nature, and knew not the Name of Art, by the Corruption of Mankind grew itſelf corrupted. To bring it back to its Purity, it was the Care of the wiſer Part of Men to lay it under certain Laws and Regulations. From hence aroſe the *Art* of Poetry.

It is a great Diſpute among the Learned, what Nation produced the firſt Poets. The *Greeks*, who to their own refined Taſte aſcribe the Origin of all Learning and Arts, laid Claim, likewiſe, to this, and inſtanced in *Orpheus*, *Linus*, and *Muſæus*, as the firſt Poets. But *Voſſius* [p] proves it very probable that this Triumvirate of Poetry never exiſted; and that they are not proper, but common Names, derived from the old *Phœnician* Language. Be that as it will, (for I am little diſpoſed to engage in ſo minute a Controverſy) I agree with the ſame *Voſſius*, that Shepherds (I may add, or Husbandmen) found out the Uſe of Poetry; and that they lived in *Greece*, near thoſe celebrated Mountains and Springs, *Helicon*, *Parnaſſus*, *Aganippe*, *Hippocrene*, *Pirene*, and the like, that were therefore ſacred to the Muſes and *Apollo*. But ſtill it does not appear, that Poetry owes its firſt Original to the *Greeks*, (for, as the forementioned learned Author goes on [q]) "if we "examine this Matter by the Scripture, we ſhall "find the People of God, the firſt Inhabitants of "the Earth, from whom all Nations are deſcended, "have the beſt Title to this Honour. Poetry flouriſhed among the *Iſraelites*, not only before the "*Trojan* War, but before the coming of *Cadmus* "into *Bœotia*, who firſt taught the *Greeks* the Uſe of "Letters. And tho' we were utterly ignorant of "what is mentioned concerning the *Hebrew* Poetry, "yet the Antiquity of Muſic would teach us that "the Original of Verſe muſt be owing to the Oriental Nations; for little Doubt is to be made but "Singing begun in the very Infancy of the World. "This is farther confirmed, from what we read of "*Jubal*, the ſeventh from *Adam*, who is ſtyled the "Father of ſuch as handle the Harp and Organ.

[p] De Art. Poet. p. 78, 79.

[q] P. 80, 81.

"Antiently,

" Antiently, then, Muſicians and Poets were the " ſame."

But to examine ſtill farther into the Origin of Poetry, (for what we have hitherto ſaid relates only to the *Subject*, and the *Authors*, not to the immediate *Occaſion* of it:) Now this ſeems to be owing to the Love implanted in Mankind of *Imitation* and *Harmony*. *Voſſius* very undeſervedly aſcribes it to the three following Cauſes, *viz.* *Nature*, an *Attempt* to write Verſe, and *a finiſh'd Skill*. By *Nature* he underſtands not only the εὐφυία, or Happineſs of Parts, but the ὁρμή, the Impetus, uſually ſtyled the Poetic Fire. I am very ſenſible of the Advantage of theſe, and of their Neceſſity to conſtitute a good Poet; but much doubt whether they are to be reckoned (what he and I both ſpeak of) the efficient Cauſes of Poetry. No one can *excel* in Poetry, without a Genius peculiarly turn'd for it; but the Queſtion is, what *general* Reaſon can be aſſign'd, that gives all Men, even thoſe that have no Talent for it, as well as thoſe that have, a natural Inclination to it. As to the poetic Fire, it may be reckoned a Concomitant of Poetry, but not the Cauſe of it. No more can an Attempt to write Verſes, which is rather the Thing itſelf in its firſt State of Imperfection; much leſs can the Perfection of any Thing be the Cauſe of its being perfected; that's abſurd, and a mere Contradiction in Terms.

The Reaſon, then, of the Thing in Queſtion, muſt be fetch'd from the Love of Imitation and Harmony. To this Principle it is owing, that among the moſt barbarous Part of Mankind we meet with Attempts in Painting, Muſic, and Poetry. For it is a great Miſtake to think that theſe Arts are conſiſtent only with ſuch refin'd Nations as are Miſtreſſes of all other Arts: No, they are Things of an univerſal Nature, and agreeable, as it were, to all Man-

kind, from the very Compoſition of their Being. Only with this Difference, that in thoſe Parts of the World where Learning and Manners are cultivated, theſe Arts are nurtur'd, and riſe in Perfection; but where the People are rude, and unpoliſhed, they ſuffer in the common Calamity of the Place. But ſtill, even there, the Seeds ſhoot forth; witneſs thoſe barbarous, uncouth Songs, the mean Inſtruments of Muſic, and imperfect Sketches in Painting, which are found, according to the Relation of Travellers, among the *Indians*, and almoſt Savage People of the North.

This Fondneſs of Mankind for imitating, proceeds, probably, from nothing elſe but their Deſire of *Knowledge* and *Power*. To produce ſomething out of nothing, is the peculiar Property of the Almighty: As Man, therefore, cannot create, it is his Ambition to approach as near to the Exerciſe of that Power, as his Nature will allow him; and that can be only by imitating Things already made.

His Paſſion for Harmony is no Wonder; becauſe whatever we call beautiful ariſes from a juſt Proportion, and proper Arrangement of its Parts. It is this compoſes the whole Frame of the Univerſe; and the more perfect every Individual of it is, the greater Share of Harmony it poſſeſſes.

So much for the Original and Cauſe of Poetry. Of its Antiquity, in Compariſon of Proſe, I need ſay but very little, ſince that ſeems, beyond all Doubt, to have been prior to it, in Point of Time, tho' behind it in Dignity. Some, indeed, have aſſerted, that Poetry was the ancienter, out of a Zeal, I ſuppoſe, to its Honour, which needs no falſe Supports: But this Opinion is by no means credible. 'Tis certain, all Learners proceed, as Nature directs them, from the plaineſt and eaſieſt Things, to thoſe that are more compounded and difficult: For Men to

ſpeak

ſpeak Verſe before Proſe, is the ſame as if they ſhould pretend to run, or dance, before they could ſtand, or walk. It is a very weak Argument, with which *Strabo* (as *Voſſius* cites it) endeavours to maintain the contrary Opinion. To prove Verſe the ancienteſt Way of Writing, he obſerves, that Proſe is ſtyled *Oratio Pedeſtris*, [as if we ſhould ſay creeping Proſe.] "Now Speech was carried, before it ven-"tured to walk. *Voſſius* artfully replies, that it was "called *Pedeſtris*, not becauſe Men againſt Nature "condeſcended to it, but becauſe they mounted "above it, as it were, and left it upon the Earth: "For Proſe ſeems to creep, when compared with "the Loftineſs of Poetry. Now, to retort the Ar-"gument, there's no Doubt but Men walk'd firſt, "before they ventured on Horſeback." If any one would ſee more of this, he may conſult *Voſſius*. That Poetry, as an Art, flouriſh'd before Oratory, or that the celebrated Profeſſors of the one are not ſo ancient as thoſe of the other, is clear from Hiſtory; but that Men ſpoke Verſe before Proſe, is paſt all Credit, or Probability.

If any Queſtion ſhould ariſe about the Prevalence of Nature and Art in Poetry, I cannot anſwer it better than in the Words of *Horace*[1]:

Natura fieret laudabile carmen, an arte,
Quæſitum eſt; Ego nec ſtudium ſine divite vena,
Nec rude quid proſit video ingenium; alterius ſic
Altera poſcit opem res, & conjurat amice.

Some think, that Poets may be form'd by Art,
Others maintain, that Nature makes them ſo,
I neither ſee what Art without a Vein,
Nor Wit without the Help of Art can do;
But mutually they need each other's Aid. *Roſcom.*

[1] Art. Poet. ℣ 408.

But if this is the Caſe, whence comes that Saying ſo common in every one's Mouth, *That a Man muſt be born, not made a Poet*; whereas, in *Horace*'s Judgment, a Man is both born and made ſo? In anſwer to this, No more to be ſure is intended by the Proverb, than that Strength of Genius enters more into the Compoſition of a Poet, than the Refinements of Art; tho' both are neceſſary to the forming him a great one. Writings that betray a true poetic Spirit, how unpoliſh'd ſoever they are, extort from us Praiſe and Admiration; but thoſe that are cold and lifeleſs, tho' form'd upon the moſt ſcrupulous Obſervation of the Laws of Poetry, are neglected, or condemn'd. The Sloth or Inaccuracy of the one, demands our Cenſure; but the ſtupid Rigidneſs, and labour'd Dulneſs of the other, provokes at once our Rage, our Hate, and Diſdain. It is of little Conſequence that *Horace* ſeems to put theſe upon the Foot of Equality. A Poet that lays down general Rules in Verſe, and in ſo ſhort a Compaſs, cannot be ſuppoſed to enter minutely into every Diſtinction. Beſides, the Saying above may be true in this Reſpect; that Poetry *eſpecially*, and beyond all other Sciences, requires a Fecundity of Nature; and beſides ſuch a *peculiar* Turn of Wit, as is *ſeldom* found, and *few* are bleſt with.

And this is partly the Reaſon, why Poets were ſaid to be *inſpired*; partly, I ſay, for the chief Reaſon is probably owing to that Fire, or more than human Impulſe, called by the *Greeks* ἐνθυσιασμὸς, which diſtinguiſhes them from other Writers. That this was no real Inſpiration in the ancient Poets, (except in thoſe ſacred ones that communicated God's Will to Mankind) nor is now ſo in the Moderns, I ſuppoſe needs no Proof; but it is certain, however, that not only the Poets ſaid it was, but the Heathens, alſo, thought it divine. Hence

aroſe

aroſe that more than common Reverence, the Populace paid to them. Hence the Title given of them of *ſacred*, and *divine*. Hence that ſolemn Invocation of the Muſes and *Apollo*, and ſometimes other Deities, with which the Poets, and the Poets only, introduce their Works.

I have no Inclination to ſpend my Time in examining into the Fables which have long ſince become an Appendage to Poetry, nor to ſearch out the hidden Meaning of them: I leave that Task to thoſe whom we call the Mythologiſts; let them, if they pleaſe, explain the Allegory of the two Tops of *Parnaſſus*, of the Number Nine among the Muſes, the Myſtery of the Wings of *Pegaſus*, and of the Fountains riſing at the Stroke of his Hoof. Theſe, I would only obſerve, are the Stains of Poetry, contracted from the Corruption of Heatheniſm, which infected Religion no leſs with its trifling Puerilities; and it is but juſt that we, upon whom the clearer Light of Truth has ſhone, ſhould at length learn to deſpiſe ſuch ridiculous Tales, which, by Repetition, are now grown nauſeous; and to refine Poetry, as well as true Religion, from the Droſs and Alloy of Falſhood.

There are ſome other Things, of leſs Moment, which I ſhall paſs over with barely mentioning. Poets had anciently Crowns of Laurel and Ivy, to denote by thoſe Ever-greens the Immortality they gain to themſelves, and confer on others. Mountains, Groves, and Springs, were ſacred to the Muſes, becauſe Poets naturally fly from the Noiſe and Tumult of the City, to the peaceful Solitude of the Country; that ſo, diſengaged from Care and Interruption, they may dedicate the utmoſt Efforts of Nature to their beloved Profeſſion. Beſides,

Carmina ſeceſſum ſcribentis, & otia quærunt[s]:

Leiſure and green Retreats the Poets court.

Becauſe Verſe flows naturally there, and the Fancy is ſtrangely awaken'd into Poetry with the Pleaſures of Solitude around it.

Laſtly, Another Queſtion may poſſibly be ask'd, and deſervedly too, (for it is a Matter of ſome Importance to know) how far Poetry and Oratory agree, and wherein they differ. To give a direct Anſwer to this, we ſay, that Eloquence is common to both; Eloquence, therefore, ought to be conſider'd as two-fold; that of Oratory, and that of Poetry. Thoſe Things that come under the Title of Eloquence in general, relate to both Arts; ſuch as, Topicks of Praiſe, whether of Perſons, Facts, or Things; Topicks of Exhortation, Congratulation, Conſolation, and the like, with which the Orator, as well as the Poet, excites Anger, Love, Pity, and all other Paſſions. Both obſerve alike a proper Decorum of Manners, according to Age, Fortune, and Condition of Life. Ardent Expreſſions, and lively Thoughts, are the Embelliſhments of both. In both the Diction is elevated, or familiar, grave, florid, or ſtrong, as Occaſion ſerves. For all theſe Things, as I ſaid before, are Branches of Eloquence in general, are drawn from the ſame Heads of Invention, and illuſtrated by Examples fetch'd from Orators or Poets. So that it is impoſſible almoſt for him that treats of one of theſe Arts, not to mention ſome Things that are in common to both. However, the Difference between them is very great; and Poetry has ſeveral other Characteriſtics beſides that of Metre; a Style, for inſtance, peculiar to itſelf, Fiction, copious Deſcriptions, poetic Fire, and

[s] Ov. Triſt. 1. El. 1.

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(to add no more) a certain Licence, denied to Orators, in the due Exerciſe of which the Poet's Art is chiefly conſpicuous. Theſe are all worthy an accurate and diſtinct Conſideration, and ſuch an one hereafter, perhaps, they may come under.

The technical Meaſure of Verſes, and the different Sorts of them, I leave to the Grammarians, whoſe Buſineſs it is to ſcan Syllables, to weigh Dactyls and Spondees, Trochees and Iambics; to teach the Difference between Heroic, Elegiac, Alcaic, Sapphic, Anapæſtic Verſe, and many others, with which the fruitful Field of Poetry abounds: Not that theſe Things are to be deſpiſed: but only as they are more proper to be taught in the School, than the Univerſity. It is not my Buſineſs to dwell upon ſo barren a Soil, or to trifle my Time about the Externals of Poetry; but to enter into the Spirit of it, and make Things, not Words, the Subject of my Enquiries.

LECTURE IV, V, VI, VII.

Of the Style of Poetry.

MY preſent Deſign being to give ſome Account of the Thought and Diction peculiar to Poets, I muſt firſt premiſe, that there are many Things relating to this Subject, which Words can ſcarce come up to, and are much better conceived than expreſſed. Every one will be ſatisfied of this, that conſiders of how delicate a Nature Poetry is; how variouſly it diverſifies both Words and Things, by ſuch Bounds as have a very cloſe Connection, upon which, however, the Beauty of the Thought and Diction often turns*. Theſe, tho' clearly enough diſtinguiſhed in the Mind; yet, ſuch is the Weakneſs of Words, can never be explained in Writing. A

* Take a remarkable Inſtance from Mr. *Dryden*'s *Love for Love*, where, from making uſe of a ſeeming Metaphor, he is drawn into a falſe Thought:

Her Words were like ſoft Flakes of falling Snow,
Which MELTED *as they fell.*

If her Words died away, as Snow *melts*, neutrally, 'tis no great Recommendation of them. But the Idea that ſhould be conveyed to the Reader is, that they *melted* the Hearer, as they fell; and then the Compariſon is ſpoil'd, and may more truly be applied to the Conception of the Poet, which melts away by the Force of Reaſon, as Snow does by the Approach of the Sun.

true

true Judgment, duly exerciſed in reading the beſt Poets, and in making proper Reflections upon them, is the only Means of arriving at this Part of Knowledge. The outer Lines of it, which afford proper Matter for a Diſſertation, I ſhall endeavour to repreſent to you, as well as I can.

But I would here, likewiſe, farther obſerve, that Writing and Thinking are (at leaſt ought to be) ſo nearly allied, that it is impoſſible for any one, in treating of *Style*, not to mention ſome Things that relate to *Thought* likewiſe. This, therefore, will be my Caſe. At preſent, however, I ſhall confine my ſelf *chiefly* to the former, reſerving the latter for another intire Diſſertation.

By Style I underſtand a Method of Writing peculiar to every Writer, Art, or Science; or that which diſtinguiſhes Writings and Writers from one another. The Beauty of it conſiſts in ſuch a proper Choice of Words, and in ſo apt a Connexion of them, as may expreſs the Conceptions of the Mind clearly, and at the ſame Time cloathed with a becoming Dignity. The Style of Poetry is extremely various; becauſe every Species of this divine Art has a Diction proper to itſelf; we ſhall juſt touch upon the ſeveral Kinds in this Diſſertation, as we ſhall treat more fully, perhaps, of each, when we come to examine them ſeparately. Our chief Buſineſs, at preſent, is, to ſpeak of the Style of Poetry in *general*, and ſhew wherein the Difference conſiſts between that and Proſe.

Now this is ſo great, that the Poets uſe many Phraſes, even with the greateſt Elegance, which a Proſe Writer could not, without the Imputation of falſe *Latin*, or the Guilt of Soleciſm. Inſtances of ſuch Expreſſions, reducible to no certain Rule, are very frequent. To mention only a few: Adjectives and Participles that deſcribe the Situation or

Part

Part of the Body, very elegantly require the following Noun to be put in the accuſative Caſe, in Imitation of the *Greek* Conſtruction; v. g. *Stratus membra ſub arbuto; Ære caput refulgens; ſaucius ora; Lacerum crudeliter ora*, and the like[t].

Adjectives of the Neuter Gender, and ſingular Number, and ſometimes of the plural, are uſed adverbially. So, *Triſte micans; Dulce ridentem Lalagen amabo, dulce loquentem; Cometa ferale rubens; torva tuentem, &c.*

Many Adjectives govern a Genitive, in a Manner altogether poetical. *Irritus incepti; non modicus voti; melior dextræ; Pubes læta laborum; egregius linguæ; Pravus togæ, inglorius auſi; anhelus laboris; integer vitæ ſceleriſque purus; laſſus maris & viarum, militiæque; ſeri ſtudiorum; fortunatus laborum; feſſi rerum; trepidi rerum;* and numberleſs others of the ſame Sort. Often, likewiſe, and with no leſs Elegance, they govern an Infinitive: *Orpheus blandus ducere quercus; ſuperare pugnis nobilis; celer ſequi; vultus nimium lubricus aſpici; durus componere verſus; Adria facilis moveri; fortis tractare ſerpentes; doctus Phœbi dicere laudes; cantare periti;* and the like.

Adjectives, and their Subſtantives, denoting Number and Multitude, are uſed in the ſingular Number: As, *Populus frequens; multa roſa; innumera avis; quam multo repetet Græcia milite; licet illi plurima manet lacrima.*

To mention but one Obſervation more: Some Adjectives, which in common Proſe agree with their Subſtantives, are turned into the Neuter Gender and plural Number, and the Subſtantives into the Genitive Caſe: As, *Ultima mundi; ardua montis; cuncta terrarum; proſpera rerum; dura rerum;*

[t] Hor. & Virg. paſſim.

aſpera

aſpera ponti; acuta belli; ſtrata viarum; opaca locorum; and many more to the like Purpoſe.

It would be endleſs, to produce all the Examples that come under theſe Rules; they abound in every Page almoſt of the beſt Poets, eſpecially the *Lyric*: For the *Lyrics* chiefly delight in the true poetic Style, as may be collected from the Examples I have here produced, moſt of them from the Odes of *Horace*. But there are, beſides, various poetical Expreſſions, which tho' not reducible to any particular Claſs, yet occur up and down in Reading, and are worthy of treaſuring up in the Memory. Such are frequent in *Virgil:*

——*dederatque comam diffundere ventis*[v].
And giv'n the Winds,
To wanton in her Treſſes.

Ut cum carceribus ſeſe effudêre quadrigæ,
Addunt ſe in ſpatia, & fruſtra retinacula tendens
Fertur equis auriga, neque audit currus habenas[w].
As when the Racers from the Barriers ſtart,
Oft whirling round the Goal, the Charioteer
Vainly attempts to check the flying Steeds.
Himſelf is born away, the duſty Car
Swift ſmoaks along, nor bounding hears the Reins.

And many in *Juvenal:*

Sic laudamus equum, facilis cui plurima palma
Fervet, & exultat rauco victoria Circo:
Nobilis hic, quocunque venit de gramine, cujus
Clara fuga ante alios, & primus in æquore pulvis[x].
We commend a Horſe
(Without Regard of Paſture, or of Breed)
For his undaunted Mettle, and his Speed;

[v] Æn. I. 323. [w] Geor. I. 512.
[x] Sat. VIII. 58.

Who

Who wins moſt Plates, with greateſt Eaſe, and firſt
Prints with his Hoofs his Conqueſt on the Duſt.
G. Stephens.

But eſpecially in the Prince of the Lyric Poets:

[y] —— *amat*
Janua limen.
In ruſty Silence mourns your Gate. *Oldſworth.*

[z] —— *& ademptus Hector*
Tradidit feſſis leviora tolli
Pergama Graiis.

[a] *Qua pinus ingens, albaque populus,*
Umbram hoſpitalem conſociare amant
Ramis, & obliquo laborat
Lympha fugax trepidare rivo.
There where the Poplar and the ſtately Pine
Meet in a Shade, and cloſely twine,
To form the Bow'r with thick entangled Bows,
And where the limpid Stream in curling Murmurs flows. *Oldſworth.*

[b] *Quis multa gracilis te puer in roſa*
Perfuſus liquidis urget odoribus,
Grato, Pyrrha, ſub antro?
Cui flavam religas comam,
Simplex munditiis?
Beneath the roſy Bow'r,
Chloë, what am'rous Boy
Sweet as the dewy Flow'r
Now taſtes your Lips,
(Deluſive Joy!)
Now leaning on your Breaſt,
Urges to be ſupremely bleſt?

[y] Hor. L. 1. Od. 25. [z] Lib. 2. Od. 4.
[a] Od. 3. [b] Lib. 1. Od. 5.

For

For whom do you prepare
(Neat Negligence of Dreſs!)
The Treſſes of your golden Hair? *&c.*

[c] *Vivet extento Proculeius ævo,*
Notus in fratres animi paterni;
Illum aget, penna metuente ſolvi,
Fama ſuperſtes.

When Fame of *Proculeius* ſings,
She mounts on everlaſting Wings;
His free and gen'rous Actions prove
A Father's in a Brother's Love. *Oldſworth.*

[d] *Brachia, & vultum, tereteſque ſuras,*
Integer laudo; fuge ſuſpicari,
Cujus octavum trepidavit ætas
Claudere luſtrum.

Her Face, her Neck, her Breaſt, her Arms,
I praiſe, not taken with her Charms;
Suſpicious Thoughts remove;
Let almoſt forty feeble Years
Secure thy Mind from jealous Fears,
And tell that *Horace* is too old for Love. *Oldſworth.*

I ſhall omit any more Examples; tho' what I have hitherto laid before you, I dare ſay, have brought their own Reward with them, as they are true Specimens of poetic Elegance, and abundantly illuſtrate what I had to ſay upon this Head. To alledge all that relate to it, would be only to tranſcribe the greateſt Part of the beſt Poets. And as the Beauty of the poetic Style chiefly conſiſts in its own Peculiarities, thoſe that would thoroughly underſtand it, muſt endeavour, with Diligence and Application, to make it familiar to them.

Nor is the Style of Poetry diſtinct from Oratory in *Greek* and *Latin* only; the ſame Difference runs

[c] Lib. 2. Od. 2. [d] Lib. 2. Od. 8.

thro'

thro' all Tongues, both modern and ancient, *Engliſh* as well as foreign. To this is owing that Difficulty, which the Learners of a new Language complain of much more in reading the Poets, than the Proſe Writers. The Reaſon why the former uſe ſuch a Variety of Style ſo remote from that of the latter, ſeems to be owing to this; that as Poetry requires a peculiar Way of Thinking, it affects, likewiſe, a peculiar Manner of Writing and Speaking, that ſo it may be ſet off at as great a Diſtance from Proſe as poſſible. Beſides, as it is confined within the ſtrict Rules of Meaſure, it is but juſt to allow it a greater Liberty of Diction, and ſo compenſate, in ſome Degree, that Inconvenience with this Advantage.

The Expreſſions I have hitherto produced are purely poetical, which, beautiful as they are in Verſe, if once reſolved into Proſe, become flat and inſipid; you would acknowledge them, indeed, to be poetical Materials, but rudely ſcattered, and disjointed; and, as *Horace* deſcribes it,

——— *Invenias diſjecti membra Poetæ*[*].

Diſſected Fragments of a Poet's Limbs.

Other Phraſes there are, which tho' not merely poetical, yet are much more ſuitable to Verſe than Proſe: They may well enough be uſed ſparingly, and with Caution, by an Orator, or an Hiſtorian; but if they occur frequently, they are Blemiſhes in his Compoſition, and mere Affectation. Of this Stamp are, *Campus pinguis ſanguine*; the Field now fated with Blood: *Vela vento turgida*; the turgid Sails: *Duces ſordidi pulvere honeſto*, or *non indecoro*; with honourable Duſt beſmeared; and the like.

But tho' the Expreſſions above, that are purely poetical, or that are chiefly ſo, conduce much to the

[*] Lib. 1. Sat. 4. ℣ 62.

Beauty

Beauty of a Poem, yet good Verſe may be made of thoſe only that are common to all Kinds of Writing. For Proof of this one Example ſhall ſuffice, from the Odes of *Horace:*

Sæpius ventis agitatur ingens[f]
Pinus, & celſæ graviore caſu
Decidunt turres, feriuntque ſummos
Fulmina montes.

Storms often vex the ſtately Oak,
High Mountains feel the Thunder's Stroke;
And lofty Tow'rs, when Winds prevail,
Are ruin'd with the greater Fall. *Creech.*

In theſe Verſes, tho' truly beautiful, there is not ſo much as one Phraſe, not one Word, but what might with Propriety be uſed in Proſe. It is obſervable, however, that even theſe, and the like Expreſſions, when tranſpoſed, and taken out of Metre, loſe all their Elegance: For tho' every Word, conſidered in itſelf, is agreeable to either Style, yet there is ſomewhat ſo diſtinguiſhing in the poetical, as throws a Beauty upon Words, which, out of Metre, would appear inſipid, or abſurd; and yet, tho' we are ſenſible of the Thing, it is impoſſible to aſſign a Reaſon for it.

Another Peculiarity there is in the Style of Poetry, that a Thing is often expreſs'd, not by Name, but by ſome concomitant Circumſtance, or Adjunct belonging to it; by which Means the Mind is led on to an entire Conception of it, by pleaſing Intervals, as it were, and a ſucceſſive Gradation of Thought. Thus *Virgil,*

[g] *Depreſſo incipiat jam tum mihi taurus aratro*
Ingemere, & ſulco attritus ſplendeſcere vomer.

Ev'n then my Steers and Plough,
In the deep Furrows ſhall begin to groan. *Trapp.*

[f] Lib. 2. Od. 10. [g] Geor. I. 45.

Ag in,

Again,

[h] ——— *prunis lapidoſa rubeſcere corna.*

And on the Plumbs the ſtony Cornel grew.

And in the ſame Book,

[i] *Impoſitos duris crepitare incudibus enſes.*

Nor the Sputt'ring of the Steel,
On Anvils form'd, and hammer'd into Swords.

Theſe, perhaps, and the like, might be reduced to the Head of Deſcriptions; but they are very ſhort and imperfect ones, and, if I may ſo ſpeak, are from their very Imperfection the more perfect. The Mind of Man does not love to have every Thing too minutely laid before it; it pleaſes itſelf in having Room for Exerciſe, and to walk alone, as it were, without leading.

There are many other Things, which Poets chuſe to expreſs paraphraſtically, and in ſhort Deſcriptions, rather than in ſimple Terms. Every Body is acquainted with the uſual little Images they give us (the larger ones I have at preſent nothing to do with) of the Morning, Night, Noon, and Evening; as

[k] *Oceanum interea ſurgens Aurora reliquit.*

Mean while *Aurora* riſing from the Sea.

[l] *Vertitur interea cœlum, & ruit Oceano nox.*

Mean while the Hemiſphere rolls round, and Night Swift ruſhes from the Sea.

[m] *Nunc etiam pecudes umbras & frigora captant,*
Nunc virides etiam occultant ſpineta lacertas.

Our Cattle now the cooling Shades enjoy,
Now the green Lizards lurk in prickly Brakes.

[h] Geor. II. 34. [i] 540. [k] Æn. XI. 1.
[l] II. 50. [m] Eclog. II. 8.

Et

[n] *Et jam ſumma procul villarum culmina fumant,*
Majoreſque cadunt altis de montibus umbræ.

And now the Village Tops at Diſtance ſmoke.
And lofty Shades from lofty Mountains fall.

So of Winter, Summer, Spring, and Autumn; as,

[o] *Vere novo, gelidus canis cum montibus humor*
Liquitur, & Zephyro putris ſe gleba reſolvit.
With Spring's firſt Op'ning, when diſſolving Snows
From hoary Mountains run, and *Zephyr* ſlacks
The crumbling Glebe.

[p] ——— *Jam venit Æſtas*
Torrida, jam læto turgent in palmite gemmæ.
Now ſcorching Summer comes,
And in the fruitful Tendrils ſwells the Gems.

Numberleſs other Deſcriptions there are of this Sort, which we admire in Poetry, and yet in Proſe we ſhould laugh at.

'Tis uſual, likewiſe, in Poetry, (which is another Peculiarity) to denote Men, Places, Rivers, Mountains, by various Names taken from any of their Adjuncts. This is ſo well known, that I have no need, out of the Multitude of Examples, to produce any. 'Tis no leſs common to put Particulars for Generals; thus *Virgil:*

[q] ——— *Veſtro ſi munere tellus*
Chaoniam pingui glandem mutavit ariſta,
Poculaque inventis Acheloïa miſcuit uvis.
If the Earth
By your Indulgence chang'd *Chaonian* Maſt
For Corn, and from the new diſcoulour'd Grape
With *Acheloïan* Bev'rage mingled Wine.

[n] Eclog. I. 83. [o] Geor. I. 43.
[p] Eclog. VII. 47. [q] Geor. I. 7.

And

And in another Place,

[r] —— *Quot Ionii veniant ad littora fluctus,*
How many Waves roll to th'*Ionian* Shore.

So *Horace*,

[s] —— *Triſtitiam & metus*
Tradam protervis in mare Creticum
Portare ventis.——
To *Cretan* Seas I give my Cares,
The Sport of wanton Winds.

Again,

[t] —— *Nec mare Caſpium*
Vexant inæquales procellæ.
Nor ruffling Storms ſtill toſs the *Caſpian* Floods.

And a little after,

[u] ——— *Aut Aquilonibus*
Querceta Gargani laborant.
Nor the bleak North torments th'*Appulian* Woods.
Creech.

Not a little elegant is this Manner of Writing, ſince, by an agreeable Variety of Particulars, it continually repreſents to the Mind ſomewhat new, and ſets before it freſh Entertainment; whereas Generals, being always the ſame, grow cold and lifeleſs, by their too frequent Repetition.

Tho' Oratory may ſeem to be more adapted to expreſs our Conceptions, as being not confined by the Fetters of Metre; yet Poetry, it is certain, makes a ſtronger Impreſſion upon the Mind, and conveys a livelier Image to the Imagination, and that at once with ſuch Elegance and Brevity, as the

[r] Geor. II. 108. [s] Hor. 1. Od. 6.
[t] L. 2. Od. 9.

Force

Force of Proſe can never come up to. In Proof of this, I might produce Multitudes of Examples; but none more full than that of *Horace*,

[v] ——— *enitescis*
Pulchrior multo, juvenumque prodis
Publica cura.

And ſtill ſhine out more bright and fair,
The publick Grief, and publick Care. *Oldſworth.*

A Paſſage, this, entirely poetical, and not only beautiful in itſelf, but more proper to convey an Idea of the Thing intended, than all that the Power of Oratory can furniſh.

To the Style of Poetry *Deſcriptions* likewiſe are almoſt peculiar. 'Tis true, they occur frequently in Proſe; but then they are uſed either with Impropriety, or with Caution; or the Writings themſelves are of a Kind that borders near upon Poetry, and therefore borrows Deſcriptions from it. Hiſtorians, indeed, deſcribe Things, Places, and Perſons; but not ſo much for the Sake of Ornament, as Neceſſity; that the Series of their Narration may appear clear and perſpicuous to their Readers. Orators likewiſe attempt Deſcriptions, when they have Occaſion for them to work upon the Paſſions. But neither the one nor the other affect them as a Decoration to their Writings, which Poets generally do very ſucceſsfully, making uſe of theſe ſort of Colourings, either of general Things or Particulars, in Miniature or at full Length, as Occaſion ſerves, not only with a Deſign to move the Paſſions, but to pleaſe the Fancy. Great Judgment is required in the due Exerciſe of this Art, and a puerile Wit never betrays itſelf more apparently, than by forcing in Deſcriptions, out of mere Oſtentation, that have no

[v] Lib. 2. Od. 8.

Con-

Connection with the Subject, and are conſequently a Burden to it. But nothing is more beautiful, when a proper Choice is made of them; nothing more agreeable to the Nature of Poetry; few Things more peculiar to it. A Proſe Writer does not only on Purpoſe uſe fewer Deſcriptions than the Poet, but in Reality is leſs capable of them. The very Eſſence of Poetry conſiſts chiefly in Imitation; and ſuch a Power it has in placing Things before the Eye of the Reader, as Proſe entirely wants; and can be conceived only, not expreſſed *. An Hiſtorian might record the Omens and Prodigies that attended the Death of *Julius Cæſar*; but it is impoſſible he ſhould come up to that admirable Deſcription of them *Virgil* has left us. He might recount, for inſtance, the ſurprizing Eruption of Mount *Ætna*; but could never find out Words to repreſent it in ſo lively Colours as theſe,

w —— *Quoties Cyclopum effervere in agros*
Vidimus undantem, ruptis fornacibus, Ætnam,
Flammarumque globos, liquefactaque volvere ſaxa?
How oft have we beheld
Loud thund'ring *Ætna* from Vulcano's burſt,
Deluge with liquid Fire Cyclopean Fields,
And toſs huge Balls of Flame, and molten Stones?

Were an Hiſtorian to relate the Circumſtance, in the Fourth Book of *Virgil's Æneis*, he would tell us at once, that *Dido* had ſtruggled long with a ſecret

* 'Tis the Buſineſs of the Poet to give *Life*, *Motion*, or *Sound* to almoſt every Thing he deſcribes, which in Oratory would be ridiculous: Thus, for Example, put into Proſe, *Juvenal's*——*jam tum mihi barba ſonabat*, or *Virgil's* Deſcription of an Oak grafted on an Elm,——*Glandemque ſues frugere ſub ulmis*; with theſe lively Images you would gain the Reader's Smile, not his Admiration.

w Geor. I. 471.

Paſſion

Paſſion for *Æneas;* but no Expreſſions out of Verſe, could fix in the Mind ſo ſtrong a Senſe of that inward Diſeaſe with which ſhe labour'd, as thoſe wonderful Lines at the Beginning of the Narrative:

[x] *At Regina, gravi jamdudum ſaucia cura,*
Vulnus alit venis, & cæco carpitur igni.
But with conſuming Care the reſtleſs Queen,
Already bleeding, nouriſhes a Wound.

And what follows, all the Efforts of Proſe can never equal: That, particularly, which the Poet ſubjoins, after he had deſcribed her ſacrificing to the Gods, and conſulting the Oracle:

[y] *Heu! vatum ignaræ mentes! quid vota furentem,*
Quid delubra juvant? eſt mollis flamma medullas
Interea, & tacitum vivit ſub pectore vulnus.
Wretched the Ignorance
Of Augurs! what, alas! do Vows or Shrines
Avail, to heal her Frenzy? A ſoft Flame
Feeds on her Vitals, and a living Wound
Silent, uneven, bleeds inward in her Breaſt.

The whole Deſcription is wonderful, and ſufficiently teſtifies the Power of Poetry, beyond that of Proſe. I beg Leave, however, to add one or two Inſtances more. The Poet deſcribing the Queen juſt dying for Love, adds,

[z] *Nunc eadem, labente die, convivia quærit;*
Iliacoſque iterum demens audire labores
Expoſcit, pendetque iterum narrantis ab ore.
At Ev'ning ſhe renews
Her Banquets; fondly begs again to hear
The Trojan Wars; again, while he relates,
She liſtens fix'd, and hangs upon the Sound.

And a few Lines after:

[x] Æn. IV. 1. [y] ℣ 65. [z] ℣ 77.

[a] *Sola domo mœret vacua, ſtratiſque relictis*
Incubat; illum abſens abſentem auditque videtque;
Aut gremio Aſcanium, genitoris imagine capta,
Detinet, infandum ſi fallere poſſit amorem.

Lonely ſhe pines within the empty Court,
Lies on the Couch which juſt before ſhe left;
Him abſent, abſent ſtill, ſhe hears and ſees.
Sometimes his Father's Image all her Soul
Poſſeſſing, young *Aſcanius* on her Lap
She long detains; if poſſible, to cheat,
With that Amuſement, her unbounded Love.

Among the other fatal Predictions of the unhappy Queen's Death, an Hiſtorian might mention the foreboding Noiſe of the Scrietch-Owl; but would fall infinitely ſhort of the inexpreſſible Elegance with which it is deſcribed in the two following Lines:

[b] *Solaque culminibus ferali carmine bubo*
Sæpe queri, & longas in fletum ducere voces.

And on her Palace-Top
The lonely Owl, with oft repeated Scream,
Complains, and ſpins into a diſmal Length
Her baleful Shrieks.

I have produced, perhaps, already, too many Examples; but I cannot forbear adding one more, which exceeds Admiration itſelf: It is the Deſcription of *Tityos*, in the Sixth *Æneid*, ſuffering Puniſhment in the Shades below.

[c] *Necnon & Tityon, terræ omniparentis alumnum,*
Cernere erat: per tota novem cui jugera corpus
Porrigitur; roſtroque immanis vultur obunco
Immortale jecur tundens, fœcundaque pœnis
Viſcera, rimaturque epulis, habitatque ſub alto
Pectore; nec fibris requies datur ulla renatis.

[a] ℣ 82. [b] ℣ 462. [c] VI. 595.

There

There *Tityus*, Son of the all-bearing Earth,
One might behold: Whoſe Body's monſtrous Bulk
Lies ſtretch'd o'er nine whole Acres; and a huge
Portentous Vulture, with her hooky Beak
Pouncing his everlaſting Liver, thrives
Upon his Entrails, fruitful of their Pains;
Rummages for her Meals, inhabits deep
Beneath his Breaſt; nor do the Fibres find
The leaſt Relief from Torment ſtill renew'd.

From the whole, I ſuppoſe it abundantly plain, that there is an Energy in the poetic Style, as it is much more adapted to copying Nature, than Oratory is, with all its Rhetoric.

Fifth Lecture.

'Tis farther to be obſerved, that figurative Expreſſions are far more frequent in Poetry, than Proſe, as they are far more ſuitable to it; becauſe it conſiſts much more in the Embelliſhments of Style, in the Livelineſs of Deſcription, and impreſſing the Images of Things upon the Imagination. For tho' it rejects all falſe Colouring, and too great Affectation of Pomp, yet from the very Nature of it we may judge it takes in more real Ornaments than Proſe. As to *Tropes* or *Figures*, as they are uſually called, many of them are never uſed in Oratory, ſome but ſeldom, and very ſparingly; others, again, agree naturally with it, particularly, the *Irony*, *Metonymy*, *Synechdoche*, and *Metaphor*. Tho' the laſt of theſe, for the Reaſon before alledg'd, is more the Property of Poetry. Some of the Figures are ſo familiar, and natural, that they are every Day uſed in common Speech, even by the Vulgar, of which Sort we may reckon thoſe above, and ſome others. Metaphors never fail of being beautiful, when applied with mature Judgment, and a lively Wit; that is, when they are drawn from Nature, connect Ideas that have a due Relation to each

other, and are not too much wreſted to a foreign Senſe. But nothing is more inſipid, more ridiculous, or abſurd, when theſe Rules are tranſgreſs'd in the Choice of them; which is the Caſe, very often, of our modern Writers, to their eternal Diſgrace.

Nothing can ſhew more the Elegance of Metaphors, and their Agreement with Nature, than thoſe that are taken from Men and living Creatures, and applied to Trees and Plants. For as theſe have a ſort of Life aſcrib'd to them (call'd the vegetative) and are really endued with it; the Tranſition is eaſy to Creatures of a higher Rank, that are endued with it in a more proper Senſe. Hence we hear ſo often, not only among the Poets, but in Proſe, and even in common Converſation, of Trees and Plants being *alive* or *dead*, *healthy* or *ſickly*. Nay, often human Paſſions and Affections are attributed to them: Plants, in particular (to omit other Inſtances) are often ſaid to *love* or *hate* this Soil or that. So *Virgil*, ſpeaking of them,

[d] *Sponte ſua quæ ſe tollunt in luminis auras,*
Infœcunda quidem, ſed læta, & fortia, ſurgunt.
Thoſe which unbidden ſpring to upper Air,
Steril, indeed, but ſtrong and healthy riſe.

And afterwards,

[e] *Exuerint ſilveſtrem animum, cultuque frequenti,*
In quaſcunque voces artes, haud tarda ſequentur.
Will in Time unlearn
Their ſalvage Temper, and not ſlow obey
With frequent Culture, what your Art commands.

Again, in the ſame Book,

[f] *Inque novos ſoles audent ſe gramina tuto*
Credere, nec metuit ſurgentes pampinus Auſtros.

[d] Geor. II. 47. [e] ℣ 51. [f] ℣ 332.

To

To new Suns the Herbs
Dare truſt themſelves; nor aught the tender Vine
From riſing *Auſter* fears.

There are many other Metaphors of different Kinds, which tho' they may ſeem, as indeed they are, a little of the boldeſt, yet are agreeable to Nature, and true Elegance. As that of *Virgil*,

[g] *Inſequitur nimbus peditum*;
A Storm of Foot ſucceeds.

And in another Place,

[h] —— *It toto turbida cœlo*
Tempeſtas telorum, & ferreus ingruit imber.
An Iron Tempeſt, and a Storm of Darts
Hovers aloft, and blackens all the Sky.

Theſe lofty Metaphors, however, are to be uſed with great Judgment, for fear they ſhould ſeem too far fetch'd, and the Style more ſwelling than weighty.

As I am now upon the Subject of Figures, I can't help making a Remark or two on thoſe Books of Rhetorick that are uſually read in Schools. They contain, indeed, many Things of Uſe, and worthy of Obſervation: But ſurely there's no Neceſſi y that an Art deſigned for the Refinement of the Minds of Youth, ſhould be treated of in ſo rough a Method, ſo full of dry, logical Definitions, as muſt be hard for Boys to underſtand, and much harder to remember. Nor is there any Need of all thoſe Subdiviſions of Figures, one under another, which, when Boys have once made themſelves Maſters of, before they have Judgment enough to uſe them, they think their Buſineſs is to adorn their little Performances with theſe ſort of Flowers, as they call them, and fling them in, at any Rate, without any Regard to Propriety: Their Style, by being thus over-

[g] Æn. VII. 793. [h] XII. 283.

charged, as it were, inſtead of appearing with freſh Vigour, abounds only with diſagreeable Excreſcencies. A Knowledge of theſe Things will be much better arrived at by Experience, than Precept: And every one that is converſant with the beſt Authors, that reads them with Underſtanding, and true Reliſh, cannot but be acquainted with all the Figures of Speech, and the Art of uſing them, tho' he never heard ſo much as their Names, or their Definitions.

It is common with all Sorts of Writers to expreſs the ſame Thing by different Modes of Speech, and ſuch Variety is often reckoned a Proof of their Elegance. Now Poets have in this Particular a greater Liberty allow'd them, than any other Writers, for the Reaſon I have often mention'd, becauſe their Works conſiſt more in Ornament and Decoration. But the Exerciſe of this Liberty ought to be conducted with great Judgment and Caution; leſt, by an ill Uſe of it, the Style grow too luxuriant. The juſt Medium, and the vitious Extreme, cannot be better learnt than by making a Compariſon between *Virgil* and *Ovid*. Both of them, you'll ſee, expreſs the ſame Thought different Ways; the one never fails of Beauty, the other falſly aims at it. *Ovid* tells you the very ſame Thing, in many Words, and ſometimes with very little Difference between them: *Virgil* illuſtrates one Thing in *general*, by diſtinguiſhing its ſeveral Species or Adjuncts, and his Deſcription of each is perfectly new. A few Examples, out of many, will make this plain. Says *Ovid*,

[i] *Omnia pontus erat, deerant quoque littora ponto.*
For all was Sea, nor had the Sea a Shore. *Sandys.*

And in another Place,

[k] *O! ego quantum egi! quam vaſta potentia noſtra eſt!*

[i] Metamorph. I. 292. [k] II. 521.

What

What Feats I've wrought! how mighty is my Pow'r!

And in the next Verſe almoſt,

[l] —— *Sic eſt mea magna poteſtas.*
—— So mighty is my Pow'r.

In the Sixth Book *Niobe* magnifying her own Happineſs, and extolling herſelf above Meaſure, boaſts thus,

[m] *Sum felix; quis enim negat hoc? felixque manebo;*
Hoc quoque quis dubitat? tutam me copia fecit.
Major ſum quam cui poſſit Fortuna nocere; &c.
Exceſſere metum bona jam mea, &c.

Thrice happy I, for who can that conteſt?
Or who deny that I ſhall long be bleſt?
By Plenty crown'd I dread no Change of Fate,
Deſpiſe both Fortune's Friendſhip, and her Hate.
My Bliſs is plac'd above the Reach of Fear, &c.

But to omit other Inſtances, only take a View of *Narciſſus* in the ſame Poet, deſperately in Love with himſelf:

[n] *Cunctaque miratur, quibus eſt mirabilis ipſe;*
Se cupit imprudens, & qui probat ipſe probatur.
Dumque petit, petitur; pariterque accendit & ardet: &c.
Atque oculos idem qui decipit, incitat, error.

By his own Flames conſum'd the Lover lies,
And gives himſelf the Wound by which he dies.
Addiſon.

And afterwards, as if all he had done was nothing, he only changes the Perſon, and brings in *Narciſſus* himſelf ſpeaking thus:

[l] ℣ 522. [m] L. VI. 193. [n] L. III. 424.

° *Ille ego ſum, ſenſi; nec me mea fallit imago;*
Uror amore mei, flammas moveoque, feroque;
Quid faciam? roger? anne rogem? quid deinde rogabo?
Quod cupio mecum eſt; inopem me copia fecit.

Ah! wretched me, I now begin, too late,
To find out all the long perplex'd Deceit:
It is myſelf I love, myſelf I ſee,
The gay Deluſion is a Part of me.
I kindle up the Fires by which I burn,
And my own Beauties from the Well return.
Whom ſhou'd I court? how utter my Complaint?
Enjoyment but produces my Reſtraint,
And too much Plenty makes me die for Want.

Addiſon.

Very juſtly may the laſt Words, with ſome ſmall Alteration, be applied to *Ovid* himſelf, in whom a Fecundity of Words occaſioned a Barrenneſs of Senſe. How far is this from him, *qui nil molitur inepte*, who ne'er attempts a Thought in vain? *Virgil*, I mean, much better entitled, in my Opinion, to that Character, than he for whom *Horace* deſign'd it. With how much greater Propriety does that divine Poet expreſs the ſame Thing in different Ways, where he deſcribes the Manner of Grafting and Inoculating?

P *Et ſæpe alterius ramos impune videmus*
Vertere in alterius; mutatamque inſita mala
Ferre pyrum, & prunis lapidoſa rubeſcere corna.

Oft too we ſee one Tree's ingrafted Sprays
Change to another's, nor repent that Change.
The Pear's hard Trunk with alien Apples bend:
And on the Plumb's the ſtony Cornel grew.

° *Ib.* 463. P Geor. II. 32.

Inſe-

[q] *Inſeritur vero ex fœtu nucis arbutus horrida;*
Et ſteriles platani malos geſſere valentes,
Caſtaneæ fagos; ornuſque incanuit albo
Flore pyri, glandemque ſues fregere ſub ulmis.

But with a Filberd's Twig the prickly Arbutus
Is grafted: Oft the barren Plane has borne
The ruddieſt Apples: Cheſnuts bloom'd on Beech,
The wild Aſh bloſſom'd with the Flow'rs of Pears,
Snow-white; and Swine crack'd Acorns under Elms.

By this Compariſon of *Ovid* and *Virgil*, how tedious ſeem the Trifles, and how nauſeous the Repetitions of the former; how various the Deſcription, how diffuſive, and yet how chaſte the Elegance of the latter? The one with wonderful Art repreſents, as I ſaid, the ſame Thing, or the ſame Thought, by different Species or Adjuncts; the other gives you the ſame Thing ten Times over, under the very ſame Species, by changing the Words only; from which ſuperabundant Luxuriance, as his Style muſt needs want Nerves, ſo muſt his Readers Patience. I would not, however, condemn it throughout; he has many Paſſages that are worthy of Praiſe, and ſome, of *Virgil* himſelf Of this Sort is that Deſcription of the Fate of *Niobe*'s Children:

[r] *E quibus Iſmenos, qui matris ſarcina quondam*
Prima ſuæ fuerat, certum dum flectit in orbem
Quadrupedis curſus, ſpumantiaque ora coërcet;
Hei mihi! conclamat: medioque in pectore fixa
Tela gerit, frœniſque manu moriente remiſſis,
In latus à dextro paulatim defluit armo.

Of theſe *Iſmenos*, who by Birth had been
The firſt fair Iſſue of the fruitful Queen,

[q] *Ibid.* 69. [r] Metam. L. VI. 225.

Juſt as he drew the Rein, to guide his Horſe
Around the Compaſs of the circling Courſe,
Sigh'd deeply, and the Pangs of Smart expreſs'd,
While the Shaft ſtuck engorg'd within his Breaſt:
And the Reins dropping from his dying Hand,
Gently he fell upon the yielding Sand.

Croxall.

But in many Places, it muſt be own'd, he is guilty of that Luxuriance I juſt now mention'd; I cannot, therefore, ſufficiently wonder at their Ignorance, who preſume to compare him to *Virgil*. But of this, perhaps, I ſhall have a more convenient Opportunity hereafter; when I make a farther Compariſon between ſome other Authors. I beg Leave, at preſent, as I have cited a remarkable Place out of *Virgil's Georgics*, to preſent you with one or two more, that are no leſs deſerving your Attention: I am ſure, nothing can ſhew the Force and Elegance of the poetic Style, more than what that Model of Perfection has left us, even upon the plaineſt, and moſt ignoble Subject. Among his Precepts of Agriculture, he gives you theſe, in the following Words:

[f] *Sæpe etiam ſteriles incendere profuit agros,*
Atque levem ſtipulam crepitantibus urere flammis.
Sive inde occultas vires & pabula terræ
Pinguia concipiunt; ſive illis omne per ignem
Excoquitur vitium, atque exudat inutilis humor:
Seu plures calor ille vias, & cæca relaxat
Spiramenta, novas veniat quâ ſuccus in herbas;
Seu durat magis, & venas aſtringit hiantes, &c.

Oft too it has been gainful found, to burn
The barren Fields with Stubble's crackling Flames.
Whether from thence they ſecret Strength receive,
And richer Nutriment: Or by the Fire

[f] Geor. I. 84.

All

All latent Miſchief, and redundant Juice,
Oozing ſweats off; or whether the ſame Heat
Opens the hidden Pores, that new Supplies
Of Moiſture may refreſh the recent Blades:
Or hardens more, and with aſtringent Force
Cloſes the gaping Veins: *&c.*

Nothing can exceed the Beauty of this Paſſage, unleſs that where he deſcribes the various Methods of Grafting and Inoculating:

[t] *Nec modus inſerere, atque oculos imponere ſimplex;*
Nam qua ſe medio trudunt de cortice gemmæ,
Et tenues rumpunt tunicas, anguſtus in ipſo
Fit nodo ſinus; huc aliena ex arbore germen
Includunt, udoque docent inoleſcere libro.
Aut rurſum enodes trunci reſecantur, & alte
Finditur in ſolidum cuneis via: deinde feraces
Plantæ immittuntur; nec longum tempus, & ingens
Exiit ad cœlum ramis felicibus arbos,
Miraturque novas frondes, & non ſua poma.

Nor ſingle is the Manner to ingraft,
Or to inoculate. For where the Gems
Bud from the middle Bark, and gently burſt
The filmy Coats; ev'n in the Knot is made
A ſmall Inciſion: From an alien Tree
An Eye is here enclos'd, and taught to grow
Congenial, blending with the humid Rind.
Or elſe into the knotleſs ſolid Trunk
They force a Cleft with Wedges; then inſert
The fertile Sprigs: Nor long the Time; to Heav'n
The Tree with loaden Branches ſhoots away,
Admires new Leaves, and Apples not her own.

I hope I ſhall deſerve your Pardon for producing theſe Examples; they are of no ordinary Nature, for that very Reaſon becauſe their Subject is ſo. I

[t] Geor. II. 73.

know very well, how abſurd it would be to repeat to you, upon this Head, all the beautiful Paſſages that occur in the beſt Poets: What elſe would this be, but to tranſcribe the greateſt Part of them? But I thought it not improper to give you theſe Specimens from the *Georgics*, that you might view in them the Force of Poetry and *Virgil*, who was able to throw ſuch a Splendor upon ſo mean Materials, and make them at once the Pleaſure and Envy of Poſterity.

To ſhun the Repetition of the ſame Words, as much as poſſible, is a Precept not only applicable to Poets, but to all other Writers; becauſe the ſame Sounds tire the Ears of the Reader. Here thoſe Figures of Elegance, the *Epizeuxis* and *Anadiploſis*, are manifeſtly excepted. Some, however, out of a Deteſtation of this Fault, fall into a greater; and in their Zeal for Variety, by wreſting Words from their natural Signification, are guilty of the very worſt Fault in Writing, Obſcurity. The beſt Writers never run into this Extreme, but chuſe rather to repeat the ſame Words, than uſe others in an improper Senſe, as may be ſeen very frequently in *Virgil*. It is probable, indeed, a Deſire of Elegance firſt brought in a Diverſity of Words; for if Convenience only were conſidered, each Conception of the Mind would have but a ſingle Word appropriated to it: Whereas now, in learning a new Language, to our great Trouble we find many Words affixed to one Idea, or many Ideas to one Word. Nor is Diſagreeableneſs of Sound to be avoided only in the Repetition of the ſame Words, but often (for the Rule does not always hold) in uſing different Words of the ſame Termination. As theſe in *Juvenal*:

——— *tardâ per denſa cadavera prorâ.*

'Tis

'Tis certain, in poetical Compoſitions we ought to have great Regard to Harmony, and to endeavour to captivate the Ear, as well as pleaſe the Imagination of our Readers. For tho' nothing is more contemptible than *verſus inopes rerum, nugæque canoræ, poor ſhallow Verſe, mere bubbling Trifles*, that have no other Recommendation but Sound; yet they err, on the other Hand, who have a View only to the Senſe, and none to the Muſick that ſhould echo to it. This was the Caſe of many of our Countrymen, of *Couley*, particularly, and others of the laſt Age; who, ſtudious only for the Beauty of Thought, neglected, or did not rightly underſtand the Melody of Verſe: Till at length our *Dryden* aroſe, who added to *Engliſh* Poetry what it only wanted, Numbers, Harmony, and Accuracy; by which Means, if we are not too partial in our Judgment of ourſelves, it now bears the Laurel from all the Nations in *Europe*.

The beſt Poets among the Antients were ſolicitous about the Diſpoſal of their Words, as well as the Choice of them. It is an Elegance, which, tho' often unobſerved, pleaſes the Mind inſenſibly. And yet any one, with the leaſt Attention, will perceive, that there's not a little Difference, whether the ſame Word is placed in one Part of a Verſe, or another. How much, for Inſtance, would that of *Virgil*

Admonet in ſomnis, & turbida terret imago

ſuffer in the Change, if it were read,

——— *& imago turbida terret!*

Various Examples there are, of this Sort, which it would be needleſs to alledge. But I would here obſerve, that the Harmony of Verſe does not only conſiſt in its being free from all Aſperity, and flowing gently with one ſteddy Courſe: Some Aſperity is often neceſſary; a Poem may labour for the

Want

Want of, and offend the Ears even with its Smoothneſs. Many, therefore, much wrong their Judgment, who prefer *Ovid*, *Claudian*, and others, to *Virgil*, on this Account; becauſe, forſooth, they find leſs Roughneſs in their Verſe: Whereas the very Want of this is their Defect; and *Virgil* does not more excel them in Verſification, than in every other Requiſite of a good Poet. He is generally harmonious, full, and fluent; and if he does not always keep one even Tenor, this is not owing to any Inability, but, as we obſerved before, in another Particular, the Effect of his Choice. He knew it would be more grateful to his Reader to change, now and then, the uſual Smoothneſs of Style, and mix with it ſomewhat of an agreeable Harſhneſs. His Periods, likewiſe, he concludes very variouſly; generally, indeed, where the Verſe ends, but often in different Parts of it, with this Foot or that, as the Sound requires. In the Conduct of this Variety, of as ſmall a Moment as it may ſeem, there's no little Labour, nor leſs Elegance. It is rarely aimed at by *Ovid*, *Claudian*, *Statius*, and the reſt, who fall ſhort of *Virgil* in that boaſted Sweetneſs of Verſe, whenever his Subject demands it of him. It is a great Miſtake to think *Ovid*'s Negligence is a Matter of Merit, and that his Verſes flow with the more Eaſe, for his Want of Care in their Compoſition; becauſe, as it is urged, they are not ſo much the Effect of Study, as of Nature. Every Excellence in Writing muſt proceed from both; the more a Poem is laboured, the more natural it ſhall often ſeem; and its Stiffneſs may be owing to Neglect. To illuſtrate what I have ſaid of *Virgil*, by one Example, out of many: In which of the aforemention'd Poets ſhall we find any Lines, I will not ſay that exceed in Harmony and Softneſs his Deſcription of *Orpheus* and *Eurydice*, but come near

near it? The whole is ſweet; but nothing can be more ſo than the following Part of it.

[v] *Illa quidem Stygia nabat jam frigida cymba:*
Septem illum totos perhibent ex ordine menſes,
Rupe ſub aëria, deſerti ad Strymonis undam,
Fleviſſe, & gelidis hæc evolviſſe ſub antris,
Mulcentem tigres, & agentem carmine quercus.
Qualis populea mœrens Philomela ſub umbra
Amiſſos queritur fœtus, quos durus arator,
Obſervans, nido implumes detraxit; at illa
Flet noctem, ramoque ſedens miſerabile carmen
Integrat, & mœſtis late loca queſtibus implet.

She, ſhiv'ring, in the *Stygian* Sculler ſail'd:
He, ſev'n whole Months, 'tis ſaid, beneath a bleak
Aerial Cliff, on *Strymon*'s Deſart Bank,
Wept loneſome; and in freezing Caves revolv'd
This mournful Tale; while crouding Oaks admir'd
His Lays, and Tygers ſoften'd at the Sound.
As when, complaining in melodious Groans,
Sweet *Philomel*, beneath a Poplar Shade,
Mourns her loſt Young; which ſome rough Village Hind
Obſerving, from their Neſt, unfledg'd, has ſtole:
She weeps all Night; and perch'd upon a Bough,
With plaintive Notes repeated fills the Grove.

In reading theſe, and the like Paſſages, how naturally may we apply to the Poet, what he does to his *Daphnis*?

[w] *Tale tuum carmen nobis, divine poeta,*
Quale ſopor feſſis in gramine, quale per æſtum
Dulcis aquæ ſaliente ſitim reſtinguere rivo.

Such, heav'nly Poet, is thy Verſe to me,
As Slumbers to the Weary on the Graſs;

[v] Geor. IV. 506. [w] Eclog. III. 45.

Such

Such as freſh purling Rills, in Summer's Heat,
To thirſty Travellers.

And again,

[x] *Nam neque me tantum venientis ſibilus Auſtri,*
Nec percuſſa juvant fluctu tam littora, nec quæ
Saxoſas inter decurrunt flumina valles.

For neither does the Breeze
Of whiſp'ring *Zephyr*, when it riſes freſh,
Bleſs me ſo much: Nor Waves that beat the Shore;
Nor Rivers, which thro' ſtony Vallies glide.

Whether it was from Chance, or Deſign, that theſe Verſes, by their very Sound, repreſent the Thing they deſcribe, is not worth enquiring. It is certain, ſome Words are ſo naturally formed for this Purpoſe, and Poetry for the proper Diſpoſal of them, that this Felicity can't well be avoided; and 'tis to Chance alone we are often indebted for theſe beautiful Echo's. Sometimes, however, they are the undoubted Effect of Art. Whence ſoever they proceed, they frequently occur, and are an ample Proof of the Force and Elegance of the poetic Style. That of *Virgil* is well known, where we ſee the Ox knock'd down, and hear the Noiſe of his ſudden Fall, and lumpiſh Weight,

[y] *Sternitur, exanimiſque tremens* procumbit humi bos.

Down falls the Beaſt
Dead, trembling, to the Ground.

In the ſame Book, in the Deſcription of the Naval Courſe, we have the following Lines:

[z] *Ille inter navemque Gyæ ſcopuloſque ſonantes*
Radit iter lævum interior, ſubituſque priorem
Præterit, & metis tenet æquora tuta relictis.

[x] Ec. ℣ 82. [y] Æn. V. 481. [z] ℣ 169.

He

He betwixt *Gyas*, and the ſounding Rocks,
Interior, ſkims the Left Hand Way, and ſwift
Outſtrips his Rival, and beyond the Goal
Smooth ſhoots along, and gains the ſafer Seas.

What could better expreſs the ſwift Motion with which the Ship bruſh'd by its Rival, and ſail'd away clear of the Shelves, into the open Sea. In the laſt Verſe, particularly, the Words ſeem with their Briſkneſs to protrude one another, and ſkim away to the Goal. In another Part of the Deſcription the ſame Image is thus repreſented:

[a] *Agmine remorum celeri, ventiſque vocatis,*
Prona petit maria, & pelago decurrit aperto.
With his rowing Crowd,
And all the Winds invited to his Sails,
Gains the prone Deep, and ſwiftly ſhoots away
Upon the Ocean.

After this, follows that beautiful Compariſon of the ſailing of this Ship, and the Flight of the Dove; the Swiftneſs and Evenneſs of which is thus moſt admirably expreſs'd:

[b] —— *Mox aëre lapſa quieto*
Radit iter liquidum, celeres neque commovet alas.
Then ſmoothly gliding thro' the quiet Air,
Skims the thin Way, nor moves her nimble Wings.

On the other Hand, how clearly do we ſee the diſhonourable Tardineſs with which the inglorious Ship drags on, after ſhe had bulged upon the Rock?

[c] *Cum ſævo à ſcopulo multa vix arte revulſus,*
Amiſſis remis, atque ordine debilis uno,
Irriſam, ſine honore, ratem Sergeſtus agebat.
When with much Art and Pain,
Torn from the cruel Rock, his Oars half loſt,

[a] ℣ 211. [b] ℣ 216. [c] ℣ 270.

And

And one Side maim'd, *Sergeſtus* tugg'd along
His ſlow diſhonour'd Skiff.

Can any Thing move ſlower than the Verſe, or with greater Art? But what deſerves all Admiration, or rather what exceeds it, is, the ſame Poet's Deſcription of the Giants Attempt againſt Heaven, by heaping Mountain upon Mountain.

[d] *Ter ſunt conati imponere Pelio Oſſam*
Scilicet, atque Oſſæ frondoſum involvere Olympum.
Thrice they aſſay'd on *Pelion* to heave
Oſſa; on *Oſſa* ſtill more high to roll
Woody *Olympus.*

How the Verſe labours! *Conati imponere — Pelio Oſſam* — Without any Eliſion of the Vowels, it moves on with Difficulty, and totters, as it were, with an unweildy Load, to repreſent to us the ſtupendous Image of the ſtraining of the Giants. In the Words, *atque Oſſæ frondoſum involvere Olympum*, there ſeems to be a Redundancy of Syllables, and we ſee in them the enormous Superſtructure riſe higher and higher, by one Layer of Mountains heaped upon another.

Since, then, it is the Nature of Poetry to expreſs the Things it deſcribes by the very Sound of the Verſe; how little Share of the Spirit of it have they, who, by an unnatural Conſtraint, ſmother their Thoughts with Words that are dumb to the Senſe? And yet this is a Fault many are guilty of; who will ſet before you a rapid Torrent in the ſlow Length of an *Alexandrine*; rural Pleaſures, in Words that repreſent the Clangor of a Trumpet; the Din of War, with the ſoft and eaſy Strain of Elegy; the Triumphs of Love, with the rough and unpoliſh'd Addreſs of a Clown; and debaſe this divine Art with a thouſand ſuch Contradictions. A Lover of *Virgil*,

[d] Geor. I. 281.

that

that reads him with Diſcernment, will never fall into theſe, and the like Enormities; for which Reaſon, 'tis from him I produced the ſeveral Examples that have illuſtrated each Part of this Diſſertation. No one can have Reaſon to complain of their Number; for nothing elſe could have ſo diſplay'd the hidden Charms of Poetry. Let me recommend it, therefore, to my young Audience, who are fired with the Love of ſo engaging an Art, to make him the Bent of all their Care and Application; let *Virgil* be often in your Hand, and never out of your Thoughts,

Nocturna verſate manu, verſate diurna.

Read him by Day, and meditate by Night. *Pope.*

Sixth Lecture.

It is a common Opinion, that thoſe mutilated Verſes that occur up and down in the *Æneis*, were left ſo by the Author out of Deſign, and to add a certain Beauty to his Style. I am rather inclined to think them the Marks of an imperfect Work, and that they would have been fill'd up by the Author, if he had put his laſt Hand to that divine Performance. It is an agreed Point, that the *Georgics* are more correct than the *Æneis*; now in them we don't find any of theſe Mutilations, and in the *Æneis* one that leaves the Senſe imperfect. In a Place or two, indeed, ſome ſeeming Reaſon may be aſſign'd for this ſudden breaking off; *viz.* to repreſent more naturally the Thing in Deſcription. As in this:

[e] *Italiam non ſponte ſequor*——

'Tis with Regret I ſeek
Th' *Italian* Coaſts.

Tho' even here, I would obſerve by the Way, the unalterable Reſolution of *Æneas*, and his abrupt

[e] Æn. IV. 361.

leaving

leaving the Queen, might have been expreſs'd as well, if his Speech had ended where it does now, and the Verſe been continued on afterwards. It is certain, no good Account can be given of moſt of theſe *Hiatus's*; and therefore it is very difficult to find out the Elegance of them. There may be a Grace, poſſibly, in ſome ſeeming Defects; as in thoſe falſe Quantities, which *Virgil* ſometimes, but ſparingly admits, to awaken in his Reader an Attention to the Rules of Poetry, by ſo becoming a Violation of them. But tho' a Liſp, a Mole, or a ſlight Caſt of the Eye, may add new Beauties to the Beautiful, Lameneſs and Deformity never can.

But whatever is the Determination concerning *Virgil* (for I would not be too peremptory in mine) modern Writers, and eſpecially thoſe of our own Country, take, undoubtedly, too great a Liberty in imitating him, who purpoſely leave many half Lines, both in their *Engliſh* and *Latin* Poems. This is often but an Indulgence of their Sloth; ſometimes of their Want of Words, or of Wit; they leave part of a Verſe, becauſe they know not how to finiſh it; and ſometimes, perhaps, it is owing to an Affectation of Elegance. To me, I muſt confeſs, theſe Gaps, in Reading, are always offenſive; not to ſay abſurd and ridiculous. But ſo it is, they receive a Sanction, it ſeems, from the Authority of *Virgil*. Allowing he left ſome deſignedly, it does not follow our Writers have a Pretence to the ſame Liberty. They ſhall have it in abundance, if they'll attempt another *Æneis*. In the mean Time, I would have them conſider a little the Difference between a Poetical Eſſay, and an Epic Poem; or if that be their Attempt, the Difference, ſtill, between theirs and *Virgil's*.

Nor are they guilty of leſs Preſumption, who, under the ſacred Name of *Virgil*, arrogantly tranſgreſs the

the Laws of Quantity. In the Courſe of a long Work, that requires the greateſt Nicety and Conduct, ſuch a Liberty, when uſed with Caution and Modeſty, is not only excuſeable, but elegant: But what is this to our little poetical Buſineſſes? In vain is *Virgil* here alledg'd, of all Authorities the greateſt, or *Cæſura*, of all Figures the uſefulleſt! 'Tis true, that immortal Poet uſes this Licenſe ſometimes, not only in the *Æneis*, but in the *Georgics*, and even in the *Eclogues*: The Prince of Poets, and the great Arbiter of Verſe, might claim a diſcretionary Power of ſuſpending the Laws of it, as he ſaw Occaſion; but for us to invade his Prerogative, under Pretence of imitating his Example, is the ſame as if a Subject ſhould uſurp the Authority of a King, and juſtify himſelf by that very Authority. We are not, however, totally debarr'd this Liberty; nor yet indulged it in the ſame Degree with *Virgil*; much leſs ought we to extend it beyond him.

Scarce any Thing is of greater Difficulty, or Moment, in the poetic Style, than the true Uſe of Epithets. Nothing loads a Poem, or tires the Reader more, than too great a Redundancy of them. Now they are always redundant, unleſs their Subſtantives receive from them either new Ideas, or ſome Illuſtration and Ornament too of their own. And yet with the Obſervation of theſe Rules, it is poſſible they may be redundant, that is, a Poem may be clogg'd with too many of them. I ſhall lay before you ſome Examples of both Kinds of Epithets; and ſhall take Care to make Choice of ſuch as may not only illuſtrate the Point before us, but many other Beauties of the poetic Style.

Of the former Sort of Epithets, that add new and diſtinct Ideas to their Subſtantives, the following Verſes will furniſh many. In *Virgil*'s moſt admirable Deſcription of the Plague raging among the Cattle,

Cattle, in the third Book of the *Georgics*, we have theſe Lines:

[f] *Sæpe in honore Deûm medio ſtans hoſtia ad aram,—*
Inter cunctantes cecidit moribunda miniſtros.

Oft ſtanding at the Altar, and with Wreaths,
And woolly Fillets bound, the Victim Bull,
In the mid Honour of the Gods, fell dead
Between the ling'ring Sacrificer's Hands.

And a few Lines after:

[g] *Labitur infelix ſtudiorum, atque immemor herbæ*
Victor equus.——

Unhappy of his Toils, the Victor Steed
Sinks, and forgets his Food.

Again:

[h] *Tum vero ardentes oculi, atque attractus ab alto*
Spiritus, interdum gemitu gravis; imaque longo
Ilia ſingultu tendunt; it naribus ater
Sanguis, & obſeſſas fauces premit aſpera lingua.

His Eyes are all inflam'd; from his deep Breaſt
His Breath with Labour heaves; long Sobs and Groans
Diſtend his Entrails: From his Noſtrils drops
Black ropy Gore, and to his Jaws his Tongue
Clotted with Filth, and Putrefaction, cleaves.

Afterwards:

[i] *Ecce! autem duro fumans ſub vomere taurus*
Concidit, & mixtum ſpumis vomit ore cruorem,
Extremoſque ciet gemitus: it triſtis arator,
Mœrentem abjungens fraterna morte juvencum,
Atque opere in medio defixa relinquit aratra.

Smoking beneath the Plough the ſturdy Steer
Falls down, and ſpues a Flood of Gore and Foam,

[f] ℣ 486. [g] ℣ 498. [h] ℣ 505. [i] ℣ 115.

And

And groans his laſt: The penſive Hind unyokes
His mourning Fellow Lab'rer, and amidſt
Th' unfiniſh'd Furrow leaves the ſticking Share.

In the foremention'd Deſcription of the Fate of *Orpheus* and *Eurydice:*

[k] *Illa, quis & me, inquit, miſeram, & te perdidit, Orpheu?*
Quis tantus furor? en! iterum crudelia retro
Fata vocant, conditque natantia lumina ſomnus.
Jamque vale; feror ingenti circumdata nocte,
Invalidaſque tibi tendens, heu! non tua, palmas.

She; Who, my *Orpheus*, who
Has Me unfortunate and Thee undone?
What Fury This? Again the cruel Fates
Remand me back; Sleep ſeals my ſwimming Eyes.
And now Farewel: With Darkneſs round enclos'd
I flit away; and vainly ſtretch to Thee
(Ah! now no longer Thine) theſe helpleſs Hands.

In theſe Examples there are only two Epithets, *viz. ater* and *duro*, the ſecond Sort of which I ſhall ſpeak of preſently. But the reſt, you may obſerve, as in *cunctantes miniſtros, equus infelix ſtudiorum, ardentes oculi, aſpera lingua, defixa aratra, &c.* add a new Idea, quite diſtinct from the general Nature of the Subſtantive, and riſing from the ſpecial Adjuncts and Circumſtances of the Thing deſcribed.

The ſecond Sort of Epithets are thoſe, that are not ſo diſtant from the general Nature of the Subſtantives, and yet not perfectly coincident with it; but bring with them Light and Ornament, tho' not new Ideas. As in the abovemention'd Deſcription of *Virgil:*

[l] —— *Timidi damæ, cervique fugaces,*
Nunc interque canes, & circum tecta vagantur.

[k] Geor. IV. 493. [l] L. III. 539.

Now

Now the tim'rous Hinds and Deer
Among the Dogs, and round the Houſes, rove.

And in the firſt *Æneid*:

[m] *Nimborum in patriam, loca fœta furentibus Auſtris,*
Æoliam venit; hic vaſto rex Æolus antro
Luctantes ventos, tempeſtateſque ſonoras
Imperio premit.——

The Goddeſs to *Æolia* comes,
The Land of Storms, where ſtruggling Guſts of Air
Engender: Here, in his capacious Cave,
Great *Æolus* with abſolute Command
Controls, impriſons, and confines in Chains,
The noiſy Tempeſts, and reluctant Winds.

In *timidi damæ, cervi fugaces*, and *tempeſtates ſonoras*, the Epithets we ſee are of near Affinity with the Subſtantives; for they expreſs ſome Adjuncts, or Properties, which are always inherent in them. Therefore are of a different Kind from *triſtis arator, natantia lumina, invalidas palmas*, and the reſt above cited, that exhibit Ideas totally diſtinct from the univerſal Nature of the Subject, and agree with it only *pro hic & nunc*, as the Schoolmen ſpeak. The Epithets of this diſtinct Kind entertain the Mind with a more agreeable Variety; but thoſe of the other require, perhaps, more Care and Judgment in the proper Choice of them: For tho' they border upon the general Nature of their Subſtantives, expreſſing, as we ſaid, ſome of their inherent Qualities; yet, we likewiſe obſerved, they don't perfectly coincide with them, but expreſs an Idea ſomewhat different, and yet not totally ſo. Theſe Expreſſions, for Inſtance, the *fearful Deer*, and the *loud Tempeſts*,

[m] Æn. I. 55.

are

are not like thoſe Abſurdities we ſhall have Occaſion hereafter to expoſe; ſuch as *burning Fire*, *cold Ice*, which are but other Words for *hot Heat*, and *cold Cold*; but repreſent to us ſome *ſpecial*, and leſs *eſſential* Adjuncts of their Subſtantives; and therefore are not to be indiſcriminately uſed upon every Occaſion, but then only, when they are agreeable to the Nature of the Subject. For Inſtance, becauſe *Virgil* has ſaid, the *fearful Deer*, and *flitting Stags*, it by no means follows that theſe Epithets are always applicable, whenever *Stags* or *Deer* ſhall happen to be mention'd. In the Place he uſed them, they were proper, becauſe the Wonder of what he was deſcribing turn'd wholly upon the Circumſtance they deſcribe, *viz.* that the Plague, which was common to all the Beaſts, brought them all to ſuch an Equality and Unanimity, that even thoſe that were by Nature *fearful*, and formed for *Flight*, aſſociated with ſuch as lived upon Rapine and Slaughter. So, again, becauſe the ſame Author has *Luctantes ventos*, *tempeſtateſque ſonoras*, we are not to conclude we may uſe the ſame Epithets, with the ſame Words, at any Time. He made Choice of them to remind his Reader of the Difficulty of *Æolus*'s Province to reſtrain the Impetuoſity of the boiſterous Winds.

Upon this Occaſion, I cannot but think, the *Gradus ad Parnaſſum*, and other Books of that Stamp, no ſmall Prejudice to Learners. Here Boys meet with Heaps of undiſtinguiſh'd Epithets, and ſynonymous Words, before they are come to Maturity of Judgment to make a proper Choice of them; and conſequently blindly pick out ſuch as the *Hiatus* of the Verſe requires, with little Regard to Senſe, and leſs to Propriety and Elegance. By relying upon theſe Helps, they give themſelves up to Sloth, their Ideas are confounded, and their Judgments corrupted. The Patrons of theſe ſort of Books have nothing to

urge in their Defence, but that by facilitating the Scholar's Pains, they allure him to that Study, which he would otherwiſe have declined, on account of its Difficulty. But, before theſe Helps were thought of, Poetry was in as flouriſhing a Condition as in our Time; and it ſeems much more adviſeable for the Boys to receive all proper Aſſiſtances from their Maſter, or School-fellows, than from theſe *Faſciculi*. To baniſh them from the Schools, would only have this Conſequence; that it would put the Youth upon reading the beſt Poets, in order to whet their Imagination, and ripen their Judgment. If theſe Books are to any allowable, let them be indulged, not to Boys, but to confirm'd Poets, who have Judgment enough to ſelect proper Words out of them. But to theſe ſuch childiſh Helps are contemptible. All Things, therefore, conſider'd, it would be no Diſadvantage to Poetry, if the *Gradus ad Parnaſſum*, *Flores Poetarum*, *Elegantiæ Poeticæ*, and the other *Theſaurus's* of this Nature, were committed to the Flames, or for ever buried in Oblivion. But to return:

There are other Epithets, of ſo *general* a Nature, that in all *poetical Deſcriptions* they are *always* applicable to their Subſtantives, and yet are different from thoſe I juſt now mention'd, that *perfectly coincide* with them. As in *Virgil:*

[a] *Jamque rubeſcebat radiis mare, & æthere ab alto*
Aurora in roſeis fulgebat lutea bigis.

And now the Ocean redden'd with the Rays;
And in her roſy Car the bluſhing Morn
Shone from the Sky.

And in *Ovid:*

[b] *—— Ecce! vigil nitido patefecit ab ortu*

[a] Æn. VII. 25. [b] Metam. II. 112.

Pur-

Purpureas Aurora fores, & plena roſarum Atria.——

Soon as the Morn, in orient Purple dreſt,
Unbarr'd the Portals of the roſeate Eaſt.
Pope, Odyſſ. IV. 411.

The Epithets, *lutea, roſeis, vigil, purpureas, &c.* may always be uſed, in the Deſcription of a bright Morning: And the ſame Thing may be obſerv'd of general Deſcriptions of the Night, the four Seaſons of the Year, and the like.

There are others, again, of a middle Kind between the two Sorts of Epithets I have above laid down; which tho' they do not add to their Subjects *diſtinct Ideas*, yet are *much farther off* from the general Nature of them, than theſe I have here mention'd. Of this Sort are the following in the forementioned Deſcription of the Plague among the Cattle.

[p] *Hinc læti vituli vulgo moriuntur in herbis,*
Et dulces animas plena ad præſepia reddunt.

In ev'ry Paſture, on the verdant Graſs,
The Calves all die, and render their ſweet Souls
Before the plenteous Racks.

And again:

[q] *Non umbra altorum nemorum, non mollia poſſunt*
Prata movere animum; non qui per ſaxa volutus
Purior electro campum petit amnis.

No Shades of Groves, no graſſy Meads can move
His Soul; nor Streams, which rolling o'er the Stones,
Purer than Cryſtal, glide along the Fields.

In general it is true, but not always, that Herbs are *joyful*, Meadows *ſoft*, Rivers *pure*, and the Breath of Calves ſweet.

[p] Geor. III. 494. [q] ℣ 520.

Theſe are the general Rules, and ſuch as are rarely or never to be tranſgreſs'd, in the Choice of Epithets: But to inſert them only to fill up a Verſe, when they are entirely idle and uſeleſs, and the Deſcription is neither advanced, heightened, or illuſtrated by them, is the greateſt Fault almoſt a Writer can be guilty of. From hence the Style is *barren* and *jejune*; the Senſe *relax'd* and *enervated*. And yet this Fault, great as it is, not only Boys, but ſome even of the Ancients, and many of our modern Writers, run into. *Buchanan*, in his Paraphraſtical Verſion of the Pſalms, has theſe Verſes:

[r] *Dum procul à patria, mœſti, Babylonis in oris,*
Fluminis ad liquidas forte ſedemus aquas.

Two Lines after he goes on thus:

Flevimus, & gemitus luctantia verba repreſſit,
Inque ſinus liquidæ decidit imber aquæ.

We had no Occaſion to be reminded *once*, much leſs *twice*, in the Compaſs of five Verſes, that *Water* was *liquid*; 'tis a Circumſtance that ſerved as little for the Information of the Reader, as for the Illuſtration of what the Poet was deſcribing. *Ovid* is often guilty this Way; as in the following Verſe:

[s] *Eque* ſagittifera *prompſit duo tela pharetra.*
Two fatal Shafts
Forth from his *Arrow-bearing* Quiver drew.

To produce more Inſtances, would be needleſs: One ſmall Scruple, I confeſs, ariſes to me upon this Head, from obſerving that *Horace* and *Virgil* ſeem to uſe ſome few of theſe redundant Epithets; and 'twas for this Reaſon I ſaid above, the Rule I had laid down ought *rarely* or *never* to be violated. But whatever we determine concerning thoſe great Au-

[r] Pſal. cxxxvii. [s] Metam. I. 468.

thorities

thorities (for I know not how to impeach them) it is certain they very ſparingly allow themſelves this Liberty; and the Writers, perhaps, of that Age, paid ſo great a Veneration to *Homer*, that they ſometimes affected even to imitate his Faults. Notwithſtanding, therefore, this Exception, (and what Rule is without one?) I may venture to affirm, that the Laws I propoſed, in relation to Epithets, ought punctually to be obſerved. It is farther to be noted, that the Words *meus*, *tuus*, and *ſuus*, (which are not properly Epithets) are often brought into a Verſe out of Idleneſs, only to fill it up, and make it flat and languid. Thus *Ovid*, in the Story of *Phaeton*,

[t] —— *Balænarumque prementem*
Ægæona ſuis immania terga lacertis.
Himſelf Ægæon with his Hand *does* guide
A Whale's enormous Bulk.

[v] *Tum pater ora ſui ſacro medicamine nati*
Contigit.——
Then o'er his *own* Son's Face a Tincture pours.

And afterwards:

[w] *Vixque ſuis humeris candentem ſuſtinet axem.*

In the pentameter Verſe theſe Pronouns, it is well known, are remarkably ſerviceable to conſtitute the laſt Foot; but it is one of the pooreſt Expedients that can be thought of!

I ſaid that *Homer*'s Faults were, perhaps, ſtudiouſly imitated by the beſt Writers; for if *Homer* may at this Time of Day be criticized upon, it would be hard to aſſign a Reaſon for the Frequency of his Epithets, many of which are inſignificant and ſuperfluous, or to ſhew wherein conſiſts the Elegance of theſe ſort of Expreſſions, and innumerable others of

[t] L. II. 9, 10. [v] ℣ 122. [w] ℣ 229.

the like Nature, that occur up and down in him*.

—— θοῇ παρὰ νηῒ μελαινῃ.
Θῖν' ἐφ' ἁλὸς πολιῆς, ὁρόων ἐπὶ οἴνοπα πόντον.

Sad retiring to the ſounding Shore,
O'er the wild Margin of the Deep he hung. *Pope.*

—— λευκώλενος Ηρη, white arm'd *Juno*
—— βοῶπις πότνια Ηρη, her full-ey'd Majeſty.

Theſe are Difficulties I only propoſe, not preſuming to aſſert any Thing againſt the ancienteſt, and almoſt the Prince of Poets.

On the other Hand, they are under no leſs an Error, that will admit only of *very few Epithets*, and arrogantly baniſh the Uſe of them. It is certain, they are not only wonderfully adapted to Deſcription, but ſo peculiarly to Poetry, that the Beauty of its Style chiefly conſiſts in them. They exhibit to the Mind Ideas of *Qualities in the Concrete*, (as the Logicians ſpeak) which ſtrike the Imagination no leſs than thoſe that are expreſs'd in the *Abſtract*. 'Tis plain, from what appears above, that the Writings of the beſt Poets are full of them, and particularly *Virgil's*. But tho' the Examples already alledg'd might ſeem ſufficient, yet I beg Leave to add a very remarkable one, where every Subſtantive has its proper Epithet, to heighten and adorn the Senſe. The Paſſage I mean is at the Beginning of the celebrated Deſcription of the Infernal Shades:

[x] *Veſtibulum ante ipſum, primiſque in faucibus orci,*
Luctus, & ultrices poſuêre cubilia Curæ;
Pallenteſque habitant Morbi, triſtiſque Senectus,
Et Metus, & maleſuada Fames, & turpis Egeſtas,
(Terribiles viſu formæ!) Letumque, Laborque,
Tum conſanguineus leti Sopor, & mala mentis

* What can be ſaid for them, ſee in Mr. *Pope*'s Preface to the *Iliad*. [x] ỳ 273.

Gaudia,

Gaudia, mortiferumque adverſo in limine Bellum;
Ferreique Eumenidum thalami, & Diſcordia demens,
Vipereos crines vittis innexa cruentis.
In medio ramos annoſaque brachia pandit
Ulmus opaca, ingens; quam ſedem ſomnia vulgo
Vana tenere ferunt, foliiſque ſub omnibus hærent.

Juſt in the Entrance and firſt Jaws of Hell,
Grief and revengeful Cares their Couches plac'd;
And pale Diſeaſes, querulous old Age,
Fear, ill-perſuading Hunger, and foul Want;
(Forms dreadful to behold) and Death, and Pain;
And Sleep akin to Death; the Mind's falſe Joys;
The Furies Iron Bed; and Diſcord wild,
Her vip'rous Locks with bloody Fillets bound.
Full in the midſt a tall and dusky Elm
Diſplays its Boughs, and aged Limbs: This Seat
(Such is the Fame) fantaſtick Dreams poſſeſs,
And ſtick beneath the Leaves.——

We meet with but few Lines of this Poet free from Epithets; many have two, and ſome three: Nay, ſometimes 'tis the Height of Elegance to join more to the ſame Subſtantive, without a Conjunction between: As,

[y] *Monſtrum horrendum, informe, ingens.*——
An Eyeleſs Monſter, hideous, vaſt deform!
[z] —— *Loricam ex ære rigentem,*
Sanguineam, ingentem.——
The Corſlet ſtiff with Braſs,
Sanguine, immenſe.

A Style, therefore, deſtitute of Epithets, will gain no more Admirers, than a Body made up of nothing but Nerves and Bones: And as the Beauty of this conſiſts in not being too much emaciated, nor yet overcharged with Fleſh; ſo does that of the other in a

[y] Æn. III. 658. [z] L. VIII. 621, 622.

juſt Proportion of theſe ſort of Adjuncts, when they are neither wanting, nor too much abound. Verbs and Subſtantives I ſuppoſe to be in Style, what Bones and Nerves are in a Body; becauſe they contain more Strength, tho' not more Beauty than Epithets; which therefore, whenever Emphaſis and Energy is required, are totally omitted. Thus *Virgil:*

[a] *Aude, hoſpes, contemnere opes, & te quoque dignum*
Finge Deo.——

Dare to ſcorn Wealth, brave Gueſt; preſume thyſelf
Worthy to emulate a God.

And again:

[b] *Eſt hic, eſt animus lucis contemptor, & iſtum*
Qui vita bene credit emi, quo tendis, honorem.

Here too, here dwells a Soul that with Contempt
Regards this vital Air, and thinks with Life
That Fame well bought, to which thy Soul aſpires.

And at the Concluſion of that admirable Deſcription of *Æneas*'s Shield made by *Vulcan*, thus the divine Poet cloſes his eighth Book:

[c] *Talia per clypeum Vulcani, dona parentis,*
Miratur, rerumque ignarus imagine gaudet,
Attollens humero famamque & fata nepotum.

Such Figures on the broad *Vulcanian* Shield,
His Mother's Gift, the Hero pleas'd admires
In Ignorance; and on his Shoulder high
Upheaves the Fame and Fortune of his Race.

The laſt Verſe is expreſs'd with all the Strength and Weight imaginable, becauſe without one Epithet. The Reaſon of this Effect ſeems to be, that Ideas in the *Concrete* are no more than Adjuncts of thoſe in the *Abſtract*; now that which ſupports, muſt needs be ſtronger than what is ſupported. To the

[a] VIII. 364. [b] IX. 205. [c] VIII. 729.

ſame

ſame Purpoſe, when this is our Aim, all ſynonymous Expreſſions muſt be avoided; for the ſhorter and cloſer the Style, the ſtronger; but the Matter of it, by being ſpread among a Variety of Words, is thinned, and, conſequently, weakened. The Poet, no doubt, is indulged much more in Epithets and Synonyma's, than the Orator; his Province conſiſting more peculiarly in Colouring, Deſcription and Decoration. But both of them ought to take Care that theſe muſical and bewitching Elegances are not too redundant; for a Style, whether in Proſe or Verſe, cannot be attended with a greater Fault than a verboſe Luxuriance.

Some, thro' Ignorance of what an *Epithet* is, may be apt in their Reading to make a wrong Enumeration of them; for all *Adjectives* and *Participles* do not (as many think) come under this Appellation, but thoſe only which are annex'd to Subſtantives, by way of *Ornament* and *Illuſtration*; not ſuch as make up the eſſential Part of the Deſcription. In the following Lines of *Virgil*,

[d] *Diverſo interea miſcentur mœnia luctu;*
Et magis atque magis (quanquam ſecreta parentis
Anchiſæ domus, arboribuſque obtecta receſſit)
Clareſcunt ſonitus, armorumque ingruit horror.

Mean while, with Cries confus'd the Walls reſound:
And tho' my Father's Palace, fenc'd with Trees,
Stood from the Hurry of the Town retir'd;
The Noiſe grows loud, and th'undiſtinguiſh'd Din
Of claſhing Arms rolls near.

there is not an Epithet; neither *diverſo*, *ſecreta*, or *obtecta*, comes under that Denomination, but are Adjectives or Participles of the other Kind.

[d] Æn. II. 298.

Seventh Lecture. We come now to enumerate the different Kinds of Style made uſe of by Poets, and to ſhew briefly wherein they conſiſt, and to what ſort of Verſe and Subject each is ſuitable. To begin, then, with that which is firſt in Dignity, and therefore ought to be ſo in Place; the *ſublime*, I mean, whoſe Property it is to expreſs lofty Ideas in no vulgar Strain, but with Words ſonorous, pompous, and majeſtic. This Style is, in the firſt Place, proper for the Epic Poem; in the next, to ſome ſort of Odes; after that, to Tragedy; then to the ſeverer kind of Satire; and, in ſhort, to all Poems of leſs Note, that partake of the Heroic, or the Buskin. There are others that make Excurſions into it, ſuch as the *Georgics*, and all of the Didactic, or Philoſophical Kind, whenever they digreſs into a more noble Field of Matter, to which their Subject ſometimes naturally leads them. But to Comedy, the lower kind of Satire, and Paſtoral, it is never agreeable; to Elegy very ſeldom. In behalf of the firſt of theſe, that Place of *Terence* will be urged, which *Horace* ſeems to have had in his View, when he ſays,

[e] *Interdum tamen & vocem Comœdia tollit.*

Yet Comedy ſometimes may raiſe her Voice. *Roſc.*

But this Rage of *Chremes*, which *Horace* mentions, is not, perhaps, ſo much an Inſtance of a Comic Sublime, as of a borrowed Tragic Fury. In relation to Paſtoral, if *Virgil*'s fourth Eclogue be objected, I anſwer, that the Poet himſelf confeſſes he leaves his proper Subject for a more lofty one, and begins his Poem with a ſort of an Apology for it:

Sicelides Muſæ, paulo majora canamus;
Non omnes arbuſta juvant, humileſque myricæ.

[e] Art. Poet. ℣ 93.

Sicilian

Sicilian Muſes, raiſe a loftier Strain;
Not all in Groves and lowly Shrubs delight.

Not that I ſuppoſe Paſtoral totally to reject the Sublime, as I ſhall have Occaſion to ſhew more fully hereafter.

For the preſent, I ſuppoſe, it will ſuffice to produce one or two Inſtances, out of innumerable, of the Style we are upon. In the ſecond *Æneid*, *Venus*, ſhewing her Son what Gods were united for the Deſtruction of *Troy*, gives us this Specimen of it:

[f] *Non tibi Tyndaridis facies inviſa Lacænæ,*
Culpatuſve Paris; Divûm inclementia, Divûm,
Has evertit opes, ſternitque à culmine Trojam.
'Tis not *Tyndarian Helen*'s hated Form,
Nor much blam'd *Paris*; Heav'n, inclement Heav'n
O'erturns this Realm, and levels tow'ring *Troy*.

And a little after:

[g] *Hic ubi disjectas moles, avulſaque ſaxis*
Saxa vides, miſtoque undantem pulvere fumum;
Neptunus muros, magnoque emota tridenti
Fundamenta quatit, totamque à ſedibus urbem
Eruit; hic Juno Scæas ſæviſſima portas
Prima tenet, ſociumque furens à navibus agmen
Ferro accincta vocat.
Jam ſummas arces Tritonia (reſpice) Pallas
Inſedit, nimbo effulgens, & Gorgone ſæva.
Ipſe Pater Danais animos, viresque ſecundas
Sufficit, ipſe Deos in Dardana ſuſcitat arma.
Here, where you ſee that Rubbiſh, Heaps confus'd,
Stones wrench'd from Stones, and thick redounding Smoke
Blended with Clouds of Duſt; great *Neptune* ſhakes
The Walls, and with his maſſy Trident heaves

[f] Æn. II. 601. [g] ℣ 608.

The City from its deep Foundations. There
Relentleſs *Juno*, girt with Steel, has ſeiz'd
The *Scæan* Gates; and raging from their Ships
Calls her confed'rate Forces.
Next (that Way bend thy Eyes) the lofty Tow'rs
Tritonian Pallas has poſſeſs'd; there ſits,
With her dire *Gorgon*. In a beamy Cloud,
Effulgent *Jove* himſelf the *Grecian* Troops
With Courage, and new Strength ſupplies; himſelf
Excites the Gods againſt the *Dardan* Arms.

Again, a few Lines after:

[h] *Dixerat; & ſpiſſis noctis ſe condidit umbris.*
Apparent diræ facies, inimicaque Trojæ
Numina magna. Deûm.
She ſaid; and in th'involving Shades retir'd:
The direful Shapes appear, and Foes to *Troy*,
Forms of the awful Gods.

And in the laſt Book, the Poet thus introduces *Æneas* going to engage with *Turnus*:

[i] *At pater Æneas, audito nomine Turni,*
Deſerit & muros, & ſummas deſerit arces;
Præcipitatque moras omnes, opera omnia rumpit,
Lætitia exultans, horrendumque intonat armis.
But Prince *Æneas*, hearing *Turnus'* Name,
Forſakes the Walls, forſakes the lofty Tow'rs,
Breaks all Delay, all other Toil; with Joy
Exults; and thunders terrible in Arms.

Inſtances of this Style fill every Page, almoſt, of the *Æneis*; and in the Odes of *Horace* are very frequent; *v. g.*

[k] *Juſtum & tenacem propoſiti virum,*
Non civium ardor prava jubentium,

[h] *v.* 620. [i] XII. 697. [k] L. III. Od. 3.

Non

Non vultus instantis Tyranni,
Mente quatit solida; neque Auster
Dux inquieti turbidus Adriæ,
Nec fulminantis magna Jovis manus:
Si fractus illabatur orbis,
Impavidum ferient ruinæ.

The Man whoſe Principles are true,
In Heart reſolv'd to act aright,
Nor impious Faction's madding Crew,
Nor frowning Tyrant can affright;
Unſhaken, like a Tow'r he ſtands, and braves
The Impotence of great or little Slaves.
The Elements may war around,
Fierce Winds may rave, huge Billows roll,
Jove's Lightning flaſh, his Thunder ſound,
And ſhock the World——but not his Soul:
He Nature's Wreck can view, without Surprize,
Amidſt the ſhining Ruin of the Skies. *T. Hare.*

Claudian, tho' his Style is frequently too ſwelling, and borders upon the Bombaſt, yet often hits upon the true Sublime: Thus in the celebrated Deſcription of the Victory which the Emperor *Theodoſius* gained, by the Advantage of the Winds:

[1] *Te propter, gelidis Aquilo de monte procellis*
Obruit adverſas acies, revolutaque tela
Vertit in autores, & turbine reppulit haſtas.
O! nimium dilecte Deo; cui fundit ab antris
Æolus armatas hyemes, cui militat æther,
Et conjurati veniunt ad claſſica venti.

For thee the friendly North in ſocial Show'rs,
Wide o'er the hoſtile Troops his Fury pours.
To their launch'd Jav'lins points a backward Road,
And Storms retort the miſſive Deaths they vow'd.

[1] De Tertio Conſulat. Honorii.

Great

Great *Jove* for thee, thou Heav'n's peculiar Care!
Sends forth his wing'd Militia of the Air.
Confed'rate Seaſons round thy Standards join,
And muſtring Winds attend thy Trumpet's Sign.

Between the Sublime of *Virgil* and *Claudian* there's a manifeſt Difference; the Ideas of the latter are not ſo juſt, nor the Diction ſo pure: He can only be ſaid to be leſs faulty, when he writes beſt.

'Tis a remarkable Property of this Style, to be bold and figurative; to abound, eſpecially, with Metaphors and Hyperboles; the Uſe of which requires great Care and Judgment. It is diſtinguiſh'd, on the one Hand, from the turgid, rumbling Bombaſt, which is much affected by thoſe who are poſſeſs'd with a falſe Spirit of Poetry, and no true Judgment to direct it; and conſiſts either of empty ſounding Words, or unnatural Sentences, or abſurd Metaphors, or raſh Hyperbole's. There are innumerable Examples of it in *Claudian*; *v. g.*

[m] *Sol, qui flammigeris mundum complexus habenis,*
Volvis inexhauſto redeuntia ſecula motu,
Sparge diem meliore coma; crinemque repexi
Blandius elato ſurgant temone jugales,
Efflantes roſeum frænis ſpumantibus ignem.

Light of the Spheres, that with unwearied Ray
On flaming Harneſs roll'ſt the golden Day,
Undrain'd and ſprightly ſeeſt freſh Seaſons born,
With ſofter Treſſes ſhed this fatal Morn.
Let thy hot Courſers ſpring with ſleeker Manes,
And roſy Fires breath o'er the foaming Reins.

In another Place:

[n] —— *compage ſoluta*
Fulgidus umbroſo miſcebitur axis Averno.

[m] In Probin. & Olybr. Conſulat. [n] De rapt. Proſ. L. I.

Diſſolv'd

Diſſolv'd the Fabrick of the World,
The Sun's bright Axis in *Avernus* hurl'd.

And again:

[o] —— *Clypeus nos protegat idem,*
Unaque pro gemino deſudet cardine virtus.
One Shield ſhall us protect,
And for its double Charge one Safeguard ſweat.

So *Statius*, in the very Beginning of his *Sylvæ*:

[p] *Quæ ſuper impoſito moles geminata Coloſſo*
Stat Latium complexa forum, &c.
This Maſs, on which the great Coloſſus rides,
The Forum with a wide Embrace beſtrides.

To omit others, thus *Caſimire:*

[q] —— *Currite candidis*
Horæ quadrigis.
With ſnowy Steeds, ye nimble Hours, fly.

In another Place:

[r] *Anni nubibus inſident,*
Incertis equitant luſtra Favoniis,
Cæco ſecula turbine.
Years ride on Clouds,
About uncertain Zephyrs Luſtrums play,
And on black Whirlwinds Ages die away.

There are many other Inſtances of this kind in the ſame Poet; who ſeems to have been peculiarly delighted with this hard and unnatural Way of Writing.

The *Sublime*, on the other Hand, is diſtinguiſhed from the *Humble*; which has its Elegance as it is uſed in its proper Place. It is proper, when we would deſcribe, in a familiar and eaſy Manner, the common

[o] In Eutrop. L. II. [p] Equus Max. Domit.
[q] L. I. Od. 3. [r] Od. 7.

Concerns

Concerns of Life; and agrees more especially with Comedy, the lower kind of Satire, and Epistles; and, as Occasion serves, may be admitted in all Sorts of Poems. Instances of it are very numerous:

[f] *Qui fit, Mæcenas, ut nemo, quam sibi sortem*
Seu ratio dederit, seu fors objecerit, illa
Contentus vivat, laudet diversa sequentes?

Whence comes, my Lord, this gen'ral Discontent?
Why do all loath the State that Chance hath sent,
Or their own Choice procur'd? But fondly bless
Their Neighbours Lots, and praise what they possess. *Creech.*

[g] *Prima dicte mihi, summa dicende Camæna,*
Spectatum satis, & donatum jam rude quæris,
Mæcenas, iterum antiquo me includere ludo.
Non eadem est ætas, non mens, &c.

My Lord, *Mæcenas*, whom I gladly chuse,
The first, and the last Subject of my Muse;
Tho' I have fought enough, and well before,
And now dismist, have Leave to fight no more;
You strive to bring me on the Stage again:
My Age is not alike, unlike my Brain. *Creech.*

It is needless to add any more: *Terence*'s Comedies, and *Horace*'s Satires and Epistles, consist entirely almost of this Style, and are abundant Proof of its Elegance.

The Style of Pastorals is likewise of the humble Kind, but still distinct from what I have now been instancing in. The one, as I said, is suited to Comedy, Satire, and Epistles; the other to Bucolics: The former represents common Life, and more especially as it appears within the City; the latter draws all its Images from the Country; that looser

[f] Hor. Serm. I. L. 1. [g] Epist. I. L. 1.

and

and freer, this ſweeter and more elaborate. But of theſe Things more hereafter, when we come to treat of this delightful Species of Poetry ſeparately. At preſent let it be obſerv'd, that there is a middle Kind of Style between the Sublime and the Humble, ſuitable to every Branch of Poetry. This of *Ovid* is a Specimen of it:

[v] *Arma gravi numero, violentaque tela parabam*
Edere, materia conveniente modis.
Par erat inferior verſus; riſiſſe Cupido
Dicitur, atque unum ſurripuiſſe pedem.
Quis tibi, ſæve Puer, dedit hoc in carmina juris?
Pieridum vates, non tua turba, ſumus.

Whilſt I to ſing in lofty Verſe prepare,
The bloody Triumphs of deſtructive War,
The Urchin *Cupid* mock'd my raſh Deſign,
And ſtole one Foot from each alternate Line.
But who, my Boy, gave thou this great Command?
We are the Muſes, not the Lovers Band.

Innumerable are the Inſtances of this middle Style among the Poets, eſpecially in *Virgil*'s *Georgics*, which are chiefly writ in that Way. For it is to be particularly obſerv'd, that, becauſe the Matter of a Poem is low, it by no means follows the Thoughts and Diction muſt be ſo too, and that there's no neceſſary Connexion between a common Subject and a vulgar Style. To preſcribe Rules for Sowing, Harveſt, and other Matters of Husbandry, is a ſlight Subject, but not therefore to be treated with the Unpoliteneſs of a Clown. Tho' the Poem be preceptive in its Nature, it may be elegant in its Manner; it may be employ'd upon Things of ſmall Moment, yet they may be cloath'd with Ornament, and heighten'd by Deſcription. But Comedy, and the looſer kind of Satire, as they regard only the Man-

[v] Am. L. I. Eleg. 1.

ners

ners of Men in common Life, are chiefly adapted to the low Style.

It then becomes faulty, when any Thing of a ſublime Nature, at leaſt above the common Level, is introduced with ſome low creeping Expreſſion. Thus *Ovid*, where he ſpeaks of the Council of the Gods:

[w] —— *tenuere ſilentia cuncti.*

The great Immortals held their Tongues.

And deſcribing *Phaeton* run away with by the Horſes of the Sun: *

[x] *Succutiturque alte, ſimiliſque eſt currus inani.*

The Driver thrown, the Car as empty flies.

[y] *Nec ſcit qua ſit iter, nec ſi ſciat, imperet illis.*

Nor knows the Way, nor, if he knew, could guide.

And in the fourth Book, after he had deſcribed the Interview between *Pyramus* and *Thisbe* well enough,

[z] *Ad nomen Thisbes oculos jam morte gravatos*
Pyramus erexit,——

His ſwimming Eyes he rais'd at *Thisbe's* Name.

he thus miſerably concludes the Verſe:

—— *viſaque recondidit illa.*

And having ſeen her, clos'd them up again.

In another Place,

[a] *Senſit abeſſe dolos, numerumque acceſſit ad harum.*

All ſafe ſhe found, and join'd herſelf to them.

* Mr. *Addiſon*, not far from this Place, ſinks in his Tranſlation too much in the ſame Manner:

Mean while, the reſtleſs Horſes neigh'd aloud,
Breathing out Fire, and *pawing where they ſtood.*

[w] Met. L. I. 204. [x] L. II. 167. [y] ℣ 171.
[z] L. IV. 144. [a] L. II. 447.

In

In the ſeventh Book:

[b] —— *agiſque*
Carminibus grates, & Diis auctoribus horum.
You ſecret Tranſports on your Charms beſtow,
And on the Gods, the Authors of them, too.

Nothing can be more palpable than the Abſurdities I have here produced: In *Ovid* they are almoſt unpardonable, who, as he wanted not Genius, muſt needs have fallen into them thro' groſs Inadvertency and Supineneſs.

There's another Species of Style, called the *Sarcaſtical* and *Invective*, ſuited, as Reaſon will tell us, more peculiarly to Satire. But we ſhall no where find a more lively Inſtance of it than in *Virgil:*

[c] *Cantando Tu illum? aut unquam tibi fiſtula cera*
Juncta fuit? non tu in triviis, indocte, ſolebas
Stridenti miſerum ſtipula diſperdere carmen?
Thou him in piping! Had'ſt thou e'er a Pipe
Jointed with Wax? Wert thou not wont, thou Dolt,
In the Croſs-ways, upon a ſcreeching Straw
To murder a vile Tune with viler Notes?

Here, it is plain, the Mordacity lies in the Expreſſion more than the Thought; which is no more than that the Shepherd mention'd was a miſerable Piper; but the Words are emphatically cutting, *in triviis, ſtridenti, miſerum, ſtipula, diſperdere*; each of which is arm'd with Poignancy, and dreſſes out the Image with freſh Ridicule. On the other Hand, ſometimes the Invective turns wholly upon the Thought; as in another Verſe of *Virgil:*

[d] *Qui Bavium non odit, amet tua carmina, Mævi.*
Who hates not *Bavius*, be he doom'd to love
Thy Metre, *Mævius!*

[b] L. VII. 148. [c] Eclog. III. 25. [d] *Ibid.* 90.

A keener Satire cannot be conceived; but the Force of it consists in the Sense only; the Words, considered separately, have nothing of that Kind in them. The former, therefore, is the proper Instance of the Invective Style; because in the Style the whole Invective is contained. It may justly be wonder'd that I should fetch Examples of the *Style* and *Thought* of Satire, from a Poet endow'd by Nature with the sweetest Disposition, and led by his Subject to a very different Way of Writing: But he had a Genius so adapted to every Thing, that he could write Satire in spite of his own good Nature. These Examples are a sufficient Proof, that if he had turn'd his Thoughts that Way, he would have gain'd the Laurel from all other Competitors; and I must ingenuously confess, that, in my Mind, *Juvenal* himself has nothing more severe than this *Virgilian* Acrimony.

The *Florid* Style is set off with Tropes, Figures, and especially Metaphors. The Use and Abuse of these, I have already spoke of; to avoid Repetition, therefore, I would here only observe, That all Sorts of Poems admit of figurative Expressions, and receive fresh Ornament from them, when the Subject requires them, and Judgment is used in the Choice of them; but that this Style is suitable, in the first Place, to the sublimer Kind of *Ode*, and, in the next, to the *Epic* Poem.

A Style, likewise, is said to be easy or strong; short or diffuse; clear or obscure; sweet, soft, and fluent; or rough, and unpleasant. The several Properties of these, to what Subject, and to what Poem each is suitable, may be collected from this Dissertation, and the Examples produced; and are partly so self-evident, that all farther Explication or Example would be needless. I only observe, in one Word, that a clear Style is never faulty, an obscure and an uncouth one always so; but that the easy or strong, the short

or

or prolix, the loose or close, the brisk or slow, the sweet and soft, or the rough and harsh, are all of them sometimes proper, sometimes improper, according to the Subject Matter of the Poem they appear in. 'Tis farther to be observ'd, That the rough Style, artfully enrich'd with a few antiquated Words, has a certain Majesty in it, which adds a Grandeur to Tragedy especially, and a Sublimity to the Epic Poem: That this Liberty, however, is to be used with Judgment and Caution, lest it appear dull and stiff, instead of lofty and majestic. On the other Hand, that Elegies, particularly, and some sort of Pastorals, require the sweet and flowing Style, and utterly reject all Asperity: Lastly, That some of the Appellations by which Style is distinguish'd are applied to Thought likewise; as *sublime*, *low*, *satirical*, *elegant*, &c. and some of them not so: For a *brisk* or *slow Thought*, a *concise* or *prolix Thought*, &c. are Terms which the Schools are yet Strangers to.

Elegance enters into the Composition of every Style that has any Merit in it, pervades every Part, and is, as it were, the Soul to it. What Elegance is, and wherein it consists, has been already shewn, at the Entrance of this Dissertation.

But tho' every Kind of Poem has a Style peculiar to itself, yet we are not to preserve one even Course of Writing from the Beginning to the End, but to rise or fall, to be sweet or rough, to be concise or to expatiate, *&c.* according to the Variety of Matter into which our Subject leads us. *Virgil*, in that Description of Prodigies which I have before cited, sometimes uses the short Diction:

[e] *Vox quoque per lucos vulgo exaudita silentes*
Ingens; & simulacra modis pallentia miris
Visa sub obscurum noctis; pecudesque locutæ,

[e] Geor. I. 476.

Infandum!

Infandum! ſiſtunt amnes; terræque debiſcunt;
Et mœſtum illacrimat templis ebur; æraque ſudant.

And oft in ſilent Woods were Voices more
Than human heard: And Spectres wond'rous pale
Seen in the Dusk of Ev'ning: Oxen ſpoke,
(Horrid to tell!) Earth yawn'd, and Streams ſtood ſtill,
In Temples mourning Iv'ry wept; and Braſs Sweated.

But in the next Words, where he is to expreſs a great Inundation, he thus breaks out into an Exuberancy of Style:

[f] *Proluit inſano contorquens vortice ſilvas*
Fluviorum Rex Eridanus, campoſque per omnes
Cum ſtabulis armenta tulit.

Eridanus, ſupreme of Rivers,
With roaring Inundation o'er the Plains
Whirl'd Woods away, and Cattle with their Stalls.

It is a great Fault, to be always upon the Sublime: In thoſe Poems, whoſe Subject leads them to be moſt ſo, ſome Things occur, that ought to be expreſs'd in the plaineſt Diction, that ſcarce admit, much leſs require the lofty or the ſplendid.

Laſtly, 'tis to be obſerved, that the Style of *Comedy* is not properly a poetical Style, but an elegant kind of Proſe. It would be abſurd if it were otherwiſe; ſince the Language of Comedy is to imitate familiar Diſcourſe, and ſuch as paſſes in common Converſation. For this Reaſon, ſome (as *Horace* tells us) have made a Doubt whether this Species of the Drama is to be accounted a Species of Poetry, or not:

[g] *Idcirco quidam, Comœdia, necne, poema*
Eſſet, quæſivere; quod acer ſpiritus, ac vis,

[f] ℣ 481. [g] Lib. I. Sat. IV. 45.

Nec

Nec verbis, nec rebus, ineſt; niſi quod pede certo
Differt ſermoni, ſermo merus.

And therefore ſome do doubt (tho' ſome allow)
If *Comedy* be *Poetry*, or no:
Becauſe it wants that Spirit, Flame and Force,
And bate the Numbers, 'tis but plain Diſcourſe.
Creech.

'Tis certain the *Style* of the ancient Comedy had nothing poetical in it but the Feet and Meaſure, and thoſe very little different from Proſe; and rejected all thoſe Modes of Speech, which we have mention'd above as peculiar to Poetry. What, therefore, Comedy has in common with Poetry, does not conſiſt in the Diction, but partly in the Meaſure, and chiefly in the Invention, the Conduct of the Plot, and the Diſpoſal of the Parts.

I am very ſenſible a great Queſtion may ariſe in relation to our Comedies, whether they are to be deem'd Poems, ſince they want thoſe metrical Numbers, which in our former Diſſertation we made eſſential to a Poem. This Queſtion undoubtedly bears much harder upon our *Engliſh* Comedies, than upon the ancient *Greek* and *Latin* ones; which are manifeſtly writ in ſome certain Meaſure, tho' a looſe one, and the neareſt poſſible to Proſe; but our's pretend to be nothing elſe but Proſe, only with a Diſtich or two at the Concluſion of every Act. It may be queſtion'd, likewiſe, on the other Hand, whether the *French* Poets are to be commended, who write entire Comedies not only in Ryme, but even Heroic Verſe. Theſe Doubts I ſhall at preſent wave, ſince a more proper Opportunity will offer to diſcuſs them fully, when I make Comedy the Subject of an entire Diſſertation.

As *Style* is my preſent Subject, and I ſhall make *Thought* my next; it may not be improper to inquire into

into the Relation between the Beauty of the one and the other, and what Connexion there is between writing well, and thinking juſtly, and how they mutually conſpire to promote each other. This Enquiry is ſomewhat of a middle Nature between the Subject of our preſent Diſcourſe and the following; and, like a Partition Wall, may ſerve to join, and yet divide them.

I lay it down for a Rule, that no one can write clearly, or elegantly, that does not think ſo. If you are obſcure to yourſelf, you muſt have great good Luck indeed, if you are perſpicuous to others. And if your Thought is bad, ſhining Language only ſerves to make both ridiculous. 'Tis like dreſſing up a diſagreeable Perſon in rich Cloaths, which receive Diſgrace from the Wearer, and make his Deformity more contemptible. On the other Hand, 'tis ſcarce poſſible, but he whoſe Thoughts are clear and bright, will be ſo in his Style too, provided he is well vers'd in the beſt Authors, and Maſter of the Language he writes in. When we ſpeak or write, our Thoughts break forth, like the Light, diffuſe themſelves around, and, by their natural Force, enter the Minds of our Hearers or Readers, as that does the Eyes of the Beholders. Words (if we may believe *Quintilian*) almoſt neceſſarily follow a clear Imagination, as the Shadow does a Subſtance. And if once we have a Conception of any Thing beautiful or ſublime, ſuitable Expreſſions will ariſe, if we think proper to make uſe of them. If we think proper, I ſay, to make uſe of them; for it is not to be ſuppoſed, that the one will neceſſarily accompany the other, whether we will let them or not, or that *Quintilian* meant to extend the *Neceſſity* ſo far. It is poſſible the Thoughts may be beautiful and ſublime, and the Words, out of Choice, plain and ſimple; and the Plainneſs of theſe may ſometimes not only ſhew,

ſhew, but add to the Sublimity of thoſe. To this Purpoſe *Longinus* cites that ſhort Narration of the divine Hiſtorian, as a remarkable Inſtance of Sublimity: *And God ſaid, Let there be Light, and there was Light.* So *Horace:*

[h] —— *Sapere aude,*
Incipe.
Begin, be bold, and venture to be wiſe. *Cowley.*

And *Virgil:*

[i] *Oſtendent terris hunc tantum Fata, neque ultra*
Eſſe ſinent.
Him the Fates ſhall ſhew
To Earth, and only ſhew him; nor ſhall there
Permit his longer Stay.

In which, and many other Places, the Words are without Ornament, but the Thought ſublime. Thus Beauty ſometimes appears the moſt amiable in its native Charms, and unaffected Neatneſs: Thus Majeſty has been ſeen to beam forth the ſtrongeſt when all the Enſigns of it have been laid aſide, and it ſtood ſupported by its own Strength. Words, then, are to the Thought, what Cloaths are to the Body; what I have to ſay farther upon this Head, ſhall be illuſtrated by this Compariſon.

On the other Hand, there are many ſublime and beautiful Thoughts that require Words of the ſame Nature; they appear pitiful without them, and fall ſhort of their proper Dignity. Witneſs thoſe Inſtances we have produced from *Ovid* of the creeping Style, and many more might be produced. Thus frequently, I may ſay generally, rich Attire, and coſtly Ornaments, add to the Beauty even of the moſt beautiful; and Kings who appear by Nature

[h] Lib. I. Ep. II. ℣ 40. [i] Æn. VI. 869.

formed for Majeſty, diſplay it uſually to moſt Advantage, when deck'd with the Impetial Purple.

But tho' the Thoughts may be beautiful or ſublime, while the Words that expreſs them are plain and ſimple; yet the Rule will not hold inverted: Words can have neither Beauty, nor Sublimity, unleſs the Thoughts have both. I mean *true* Beauty, and *true* Sublimity; becauſe if theſe are wanting in the Thought, that Sparkling which appears in the Diction, is only a falſe Light; as fine Cloaths are no longer fine when beſtowed upon ſome diſhoneſt Form; they are far from being an elegant Dreſs, when they ill become the Wearer. And if the Thought, in this Caſe, is not ſublime, all the Magnificence of Diction is ridiculous Affectation, and mere Bombaſt. Only one Kind of Poem ought to be excepted; which tho' it has no *Latin* Name, is well enough known in all the modern Languages of *Europe*: The *Doggrel* Kind I mean; which abounds much in an ingenious Liberty of Jeſting, and dreſſing up little Things in pompous Words. But in all ſerious Writing, this Rule holds univerſally.

But tho' beautiful Expreſſions cannot make the Thought beautiful, yet they ſtrongly recommend its Beauty, and even improve it; as Dreſs and Ornament cannot create a Face, yet they may aſſiſt its Charms, and add to thoſe that Nature has beſtow'd upon it. In Proof of this, I might produce innumerable Examples that are to be met with every where in the Writings of the beſt Poets. When *Virgil* had excellently deſcribed the broken and ſhattered Condition of *Sergeſtus*'s Ship, which we mention'd above, it was undoubtedly a beautiful Thought to compare it working along with one Bank of Oars, to the labour'd Motion of a wounded Serpent. But how does the Poet heighten the Beauty of the Compariſon in the following Manner of deſcribing it?

Qualis

[k] *Qualis ſæpe viæ deprenſus in aggere ſerpens,*
Ærea quem obliquum rota tranſiit, aut gravis ictu
Seminecem liquit, ſaxo lacerumque, viator:
Nequicquam longos fugiens dat corpore tortus;
Parte ferox, ardenſque oculis, & ſibila colla
Arduus attollens; pars vulnere clauda retentat
Nexantem nodos, ſeque in ſua membra plicantem.

As when a Snake
Is catch'd (as oft it happens) on a Ridge
Of riſing Ground; whoſe Body croſs'd aſlant
A brazen Wheel has mangled on the Road;
Or ſome ſour Paſſenger, with heavy Blow,
Has left half dead, and ſhatter'd with a Stone:
He flying twiſts his Length in tortuous Wreaths,
Part fierce with ardent Eyes, and hiſſing Tongue,
Uprears aloft his ſwelling Neck in Air;
Part damag'd in the Wound retards him cruſh'd
Wriggling his Spires, and knitting Knots in vain.

Ariſtæus's Entrance into the ſubterraneous Grotto's of the Water Nymph *Cyrene*, is thus deſcribed by the ſame Poet:

[l] —— *Simul alta jubet diſcedere late*
Flumina, qua juvenis greſſus inferret; at illum
Curvata in montis faciem circumſtetit unda,
Accepitque ſinu vaſto, miſitque ſub amnem.
Jamque domum mirans genitricis, & humida regna,
Speluncique lacus clauſos, lucoſque ſonantes,
Ibat, & ingenti motu ſtupefactus aquarum,
Omnia ſub magna labentia flumina terra
Spectabat diverſa locis, &c.

At once ſhe bids on either Side retire
The Rivers, that the Youth unhurt might paſs:
Him, like a Mountain, arch'd, the ſtanding Waves
Surround; their ſpacious Boſom open wide,

[k] Æn. V. 273. [l] Geor. IV. 359.

And ſpread his Entrance to the hoary Deep.
And now admiring at his Mother's Court,
And liquid Realms, the Lakes in Caverns pent,
And ſounding Groves; he goes, and wond'ring hears
The rumbling Billows; nor leſs wond'ring ſees
The various Streams, which ſubterraneous glide
Thro' the vaſt Globe.

The Thought, the Fiction, is perfectly beautiful; but who is ſo blind, as not to ſee that theſe poetical Ideas receive no ſmall Embelliſhment from the Elegance of the Expreſſion; or ſo dull, as not to love and admire both the Art and Ingenuity of the Writer? We ſee, then, that the Elegance of Thought is much promoted by that of Diction; and this is true of all Sorts of Thought, as well the beautiful, as the ſublime, but more particularly of that which conſiſts of *Compariſon* and *Deſcription*. On the other Hand, that the Elegance and Sublimity of Thought conduces much to the Elegance and Sublimity of Expreſſion, is too clear to need either Proof or Example; Thought being, as it were, the Life of Words, and (as the Schoolmen ſpeak) that which gives them their *eſſential Form*. Upon the whole, then, beautiful Thoughts and Expreſſions mutually help and adorn each other, as a goodly Perſonage and a rich Attire. Wherein conſiſts the Beauty of Thought, ſhall be the Subject of our next Enquiry.

LECTURE

LECTURE VIII, IX, X, XI.

Of the Beauty of Thought in Poetry; or of Elegance and Sublimity.

IN our former Diſſertation we treated of the Style of Poetry: From *Words* we paſs on to *Things*, and propoſe to ſpeak of the Beauty of Thought; to ſhew wherein the Elegance and Sublimity of it conſiſts; the Reaſon and Foundation of it; and to enumerate its different Species.

Every one muſt be ſenſible, as well as myſelf, what a difficult Subject I engage in. If therefore I ſometimes err, in ſo abſtruſe a Path, I truſt I have a prevailing Plea for your Pardon.

In the preceding Diſſertation we have abundantly ſhewn, that the *Diction* of Poetry is very different from that of Proſe; but between the *Thought* of the one and the other (excepting only Fiction) the Difference is not ſo great. What, therefore, I ſhall ſay upon this Head, will, for the moſt part, be in common both to the Poet and the Orator; for the Beauty of Thought is generally the ſame, whether it is expreſs'd in Verſe or Proſe. But becauſe Poetry is our Province, I judged it proper to produce the Examples that illuſtrate my Subject, from the Writings of the beſt Poets.

Writers have taken much Pains to give us a complete Definition of *Thought*; and ſome have openly

declar'd, that it is not capable of a Definition. Among theſe, our Countryman *Couley* bears the firſt Place, who directly aſſerts, that *Wit* (for that is the Word we often uſe for thoſe Expreſſions that are the Effect of it) can only be defin'd in negative Terms. But (with the Leave of the Learned) this Word, and the Idea affix'd to it, is as capable of a poſitive and adequate a Definition, as many others which we define the moſt logically, and boaſt of having the cleareſt Notion of. *Wit*, then, in the largeſt Senſe of the Word, ſeems to be nothing elſe, but *a Thought formed ſo agreeably to Nature and right Reaſon, and impreſſed upon the Mind with ſuch Clearneſs, Vivacity, and Dignity, as excites Pleaſure or Admiration.*

Wit we take, as we ſaid, in *its largeſt Extent*. For it is not here underſtood in that vulgar and narrow Senſe by which it denotes only Jokes and pointed Turns; but contains every Conception of the Mind that is beautiful; whatever Elegance or Sublimity the Imagination is capable of.

A Thought formed agreeably to Nature and right Reaſon, is, in this Definition, the *Genus*; what follows contains the *Difference*. By the former Part of the Definition we underſtand a *Thought that is founded upon ſolid and juſt Principles*, which is twofold, either a Thought *ſimply* conſider'd, or a *beautiful* Thought. Every ingenious Thought, then, is well founded, but every Thought that is well founded, is not an ingenious one.

It was neceſſary to make this the *Genus* of the *Definition*, that true Wit might be diſtinguiſh'd from falſe. Thoughts of real Beauty are always form'd upon Truth, Nature, and right Reaſon. If they are not built upon this Foundation, or flow from a leſs noble Spring, they are to be rank'd among thoſe *falſe Brillants*, as they are term'd by our modern, and eſpecially the *French*, Writers, which may ſerve

to

to please Boys, and some others of as little Judgment, but will always be despis'd by Men of Taste, and of Understanding, who adhere to the infallible Maxim laid down by *Horace*:

[m] *Scribendi recte* sapere *est & principium & fons.*
Sound Judgment is the Ground of writing well.
Roscom.

Thoughts are the Images of Things, as Words are of Thoughts; and we all know that Images and Pictures are only so far true, as they are true Representations of Men and Things. Those Passages in *Virgil*, *Terræque, urbesque recedunt*, and the like, where Things are represented not as they *are*, but as they *seem* to be, are no Objection to what I advance. For Poets, as well as Painters, think it their Business to take the Likeness of Things from their Appearance. When they do this, their Thoughts are just, according to the strictest Rules of Reason; for in Description or Painting that is *truly* express'd, which is express'd as the Thing *appears* to be. Neither *Metaphors*, *Hyperboles*, *Ironies*, nor even *equivocal* Expressions, when properly used, nor *Fiction* or *Fable*, are any Deviation from this Rule of right Thinking: For there is a wide Difference between *Falseness* and *Fiction*, between that which is *truly* false, (if I may so speak) and that which is only so in Appearance. Tropes and Fictions are raised, as it were, upon the Foundation of right Reason. Truth is the Basis of them, and receives new Lustre from such airy Disguises. All this will be sufficiently plain in the Sequel of this Dissertation, and from the Examples to be produced in it. But, in the first Place, it may not be improper to give one or two Instances of false Wit; that so we may settle the Difference between what is true, and counterfeit.

[m] Art. Poet. ℣ 309.

We frequently meet with Paſſages that want even common Senſe, and yet have ſomewhat of a ridiculous Brightneſs in them. A certain Poet gives us a miſerable Deſcription of the Fate of *Pyramus* and *Thisbe*, and tells us, that the Sword, when died with the *Blood* of the unhappy Lover, bluſh'd, from a Conſciouſneſs of its Crime. No, [a] rather let the unhappy Writer bluſh, from a deep Senſe of that Elegance which Boys would be aſham'd to own. Another of the ſame Form, I know not his Name, tells us, that Lovers always abound with Wit, becauſe *Venus* ſprung from the *ſalt* Ocean. It would be endleſs to mention all the Turns of this ſort, which take their Riſe from the feign'd Names or Adjuncts of the Heathen Deities.

Modern Writers, all over *Europe*, are many of them wonderfully fond of theſe ſort of Trifles, eſpecially in their Epigrams and Love-Verſes. And ſome cannot refrain from them even in their larger Compoſitions. Several of our Top Poets of the former Age, (for in the preſent theſe kind of Wittiziſms are in leſs Requeſt) abound much with theſe ſhining Spots: Nor are the Ancients, (I inſtance in *Ovid*) wholly free from them. I can't help here obſerving, what an inexhauſtible Fund of Conceits our modern Poets are ſupplied with from the Eyes of the Fair Sex; which, as they are the fruitful Parents of various Miſchiefs, ſo are they, likewiſe, it ſeems, of ſpurious Wit.

There is another Species of Thought which does not, like the former, deviate from Truth and right Reaſon, yet is a Violation of the Laws of Beauty and Accuracy, and is an Inſtance of falſe Wit, tho' not of falſe Conception. In the *Troas* of *Seneca*, *Hecuba* lamenting that the Body of *Priamus* ſhould lie unburied, thus expreſſes her Grief:

[a] See the Preface to Monſieur *Boileau*'s Works.

— *Ille*

——— *Ille, tot regum parens,*
Caret ſepulchro Priamus, & flamma indiget,
Ardente Troja. ——— [a]

Priam, the Father of a Race of Kings,
Now wants a Grave, nor finds a Fun'ral Fire,
While his own City burns.

How poor a Thought, upon ſo great and ſublime a Subject? How childiſh a Reflection, that while *Troy* was all in Flames, the Body of *Priamus* ſhould want Funeral ones? How much better does *Virgil* deſcribe the very ſame Circumſtance?

[b] *Hæc finis Priami fatorum, hic exitus illum*
Sorte tulit; Trojam incenſam & prolapſa videntem
Pergama; tot quondam populis, terriſque, ſuperbum
Regnatorem Aſiæ: jacet ingens littore truncus,
Avulſumque humeris caput, & ſine nomine corpus.

Such was the End of *Priam*'s Fate; the laſt
Concluding Scene which Deſtiny decreed
To *Aſia*'s Lord; once o'er ſo many Realms
And Nations, ſov'reign Monarch; having ſeen
His *Troy* in Flames, and tumbling to the Ground:
Upon the Shore the Royal Body lies
Expos'd; the Head from off the Shoulders torn;
A Trunk diſhonour'd, and without a Name.

Here every Thing is great, full of Majeſty, and ſuitable to the Subject. The Poet knew better than to ſport with Conceits upon ſo ſolemn an Occaſion; tho' *Ovid* is perpetually hunting after them: But this is never *Virgil*'s Fault; and ought to have been as ſtudiouſly avoided by *Seneca*: For Tragedy is of as ſublime a Nature as Epic.

That celebrated Paſſage of *Lucan*, at firſt Appearance, I confeſs, ſounds great:

[a] Act I. Sc. 1. [b] Æn. II. 554.

[q] —— *Cælo tegitur, qui non habet urnam.*

The Heav'ns entomb the Man that wants an Urn.

The Aſſertion is true, but the Wit is *falſe*. It is applied to the Soldiers that died in the Field, and lay unburied: And tho' we ſhould grant that the Heavens and the Stars were Materials of greater Value than Braſs and Marble; yet they are a kind of Monument, that, like Death itſelf, is common to all; and, in ſpite of this *Stoical* Maxim of the Poet, all Mankind muſt think it more honourable to be laid at Reſt in a Grave, than expos'd to Birds and Beaſts, who at laſt may boaſt of the ſame Canopy of the Sky, that theſe unburied Heroes enjoy'd.

Sometimes it happens, that there is a Mixture of true Thought and falſe; or the Conception is partly one, partly the other. Thus in that noted Epigram by a Modern:

[r] *Lumine Acon dextro, capta eſt Leonilla ſiniſtro;*
Et potis eſt forma vincere uterque Deos.
Blande Puer, lumen quod habes concede ſorori;
Sic Tu cæcus Amor, ſic erit Illa Venus.

Strephon and *Phyllis* each one Eye have loſt,
Yet may of Beauty more than Mortal boaſt.
Let his bright Orb to her the Boy reſign,
He would a *Cupid*, ſhe a *Venus* ſhine.

The Epigram *ſeems* elegant, and *is* really ſo; but the different Parts of it are not perfectly reconcileable. For if *Strephon* and *Phyllis* exceeded the Gods in Beauty, what great Wonder is it, he ſhould become *Cupid*, ſhe *Venus?* Beſides, 'tis abſurd to ſuppoſe that he ſhould be either willing, or able to transfer his Eye to his Siſter. There is, however, in theſe Lines a true epigrammatic Spirit; and nothing can have more of it than the laſt of them. For as in

[q] Lib. VII. [r] Anthol. Poem. Ital.

Reaſoning

Reaſoning a true Concluſion may be drawn from falſe Premiſes; ſo in Writing an elegant Thought may flow from falſe Wit. I would not have it objected, that I here draw a Compariſon between Things that are no way allied; for all Beauty, not only in the argumentative Way of Writing, but even in polite Literature, depends upon the Rules of Logic, and ſtrict Reaſoning.

The Paſſages I have here produced are a few Inſtances of falſe Eloquence. Wit, therefore, differs from a plain ſolid Thought, as a poliſh'd Diamond from a rough one; and as that does not ceaſe to be a Diamond by being poliſh'd, ſo a Thought loſes nothing of its Solidity by its Elegance. We all know, that a Diamond is not leſs diſtinguiſh'd from other Stones by its Solidity, than its Luſtre: The Difference, therefore, between true and falſe Wit, is much the ſame as between the Gems of the Eaſt, and thoſe of our *Britiſh* Rocks.

Some Verſes I have known (but not by what Means) that owe all their Succeſs to popular Applauſe, and ill-grounded Fame, inſtead of Merit. No one can be a Stranger to the celebrated Epigram of *Sanazarius* upon the City of *Venice*; and who ſhall now dare to queſtion its Title to Fame, after ſo long a Preſcription?

Viderat Adriacis Venetam Neptunus in undis
Stare Urbem, & toti ponere jura mari.
Nunc mihi Tarpeias quantumvis, Jupiter, arces
Objice, & illa tui mœnia Martis, ait:
Si pelago Tyberim præfers, Urbem aſpice utramque;
Illam homines dices, hanc poſuiſſe Deos.

In th'*Adriatic* Gulf, when *Neptune* ſaw
Venice ariſe, and give to Seas the Law;
Now, *Jove*, ſaid he, *Tarpeian* Tow'rs oppoſe,
And the proud Walls of *Mars* compare with thoſe.

The *Tyber* to the Sea prefer! and then
One own the Work of Gods, and one of Men.

I ſubmit with humble Deference to the Judgment of the Learned; but, if I may freely ſpeak my Sentiments, I have often wonder'd at the good Fortune of *Sanazarius*, who, by ſix empty Verſes, got not only ſo great a Name, but (which is more ſubſtantial) ſo great a Sum of Money. The Verſes, indeed, are ſmooth and harmonious; they have the outward Appearance of an Epigram, and contain a poetical Fiction of *Jupiter* and *Neptune*: But take away theſe (and theſe, without ſomewhat elſe, ſignify little) what elſe, in the Name of Elegance, does the Poet tell us, but that *Venice* is preferable to *Rome?* In naked and ſimple Terms he ſays, that the former looks more like the Work of the Gods, than the latter. Where is the *Acumen*, the Wit, or the Turn? The Shell, indeed, of an Epigram, we ſee; but not ſo much as the Shadow of Wit.

The firſt, and principal Species of Wit, is, undoubtedly, that which does not depend on poetical Fiction, but upon Truth itſelf. What the *French* Poet * ſays upon this Head, in the Preface to his Works, is very juſt; and I think I cannot do better than give you his Sentiments in an *Engliſh* Dreſs. "Now, if any Man asks me, ſays he, what this "Agreeableneſs and this Salt is? I anſwer, That it "is a *Je ne ſçay quoy*, that may be better conceiv'd "than deſcrib'd. But yet, in my Opinion, it prin-"cipally conſiſts in offering nothing to the Reader "but true Thoughts, and juſt Expreſſions. The "Mind of Man is naturally full of an infinite Num-"ber of confus'd Ideas of *Truth*, which he often-"times perceives but by Halves; and nothing plea-"ſes him more, than when any of theſe Ideas are "preſented to him well illuſtrated, and ſet in a good

* *Boileau.*

"Light.

"Light. What is a new brillant extraordinary "Thought? It is not, as the Ignorant perſuade "themſelves, a Thought which no Body ever had, "nor ought to have. But, on the contrary, a "Thought which every Body ought to have had, "and which ſome one bethinks himſelf of expreſ-"ſing firſt. *Wit* is not *Wit*, but as it ſays ſomething "every Body thought of, and that in a lively, deli-"cate, and new Manner. Let us conſider, for Ex-"ample, the famous Reply of *Lewis* XII. to ſome "of his Miniſters, who adviſed him to puniſh ſe-"veral Perſons that in the former Reign (when he "was only Duke of *Orleans*) had made it their Bu-"ſineſs to prejudice him, *A King of* France, *ſays "he, revenges not the Injuries done to a Duke of* Or-"leans. How comes this Saying to ſtrike us ſo "ſuddenly? Is it not plainly, becauſe it preſents to "our Eyes a Truth which all the World is ſenſible "of, and which expreſſes better than all the fineſt "Diſcourſes of Morality, *That a great Prince, after "his Acceſſion to the Throne, ought no longer to act "by private Movements, nor to have any other View "but the Glory and general Good of his Kingdom?*" Thus far that celebrated Author, who ſeems very happily to have illuſtrated the Subject we are upon.

We have many elegant Thoughts, likewiſe, founded upon Truth, with a Mixture of poetical Fiction; as in that Epigram of *Martial* addreſs'd to *Lucifer*, the Night before *Cæſar*'s Return to *Rome*: After the firſt Invocation,

> [1] *Phoſphore, redde diem; quid gaudia noſtra moraris?*
> *Cæſare venturo, Phoſphore, redde diem.*

Thou bright Forerunner of the golden Day,
When *Cæſar* comes, what clogs thy roſy Way?

At ſome Diſtance he adds:

[1] Lib. VIII. Epig. 21.

Quid

Quid cupidum Titana tenes? jam Xanthus & Æthon
Frena volunt; vigilat Memnonis alma Parens.

Why hold'ſt thou *Phœbus*, lab'ring to be freed?
His fiery Courſers arm themſelves for Speed,
And fair *Aurora* quits her dewy Bed.

He then ſubjoins:

Tarda tamen nitidæ non cedunt ſidera luci;
Et cupit Auſonium Luna videre Ducem.

But ſcarce the lagging Stars deſert the Skies,
And penſive *Cynthia* for the Triumph ſighs.

'Tis an undoubted Truth, that Time ſeems long to thoſe that are big with Expectation. The Poet, therefore, having, for this Reaſon, chid the Tardineſs of the Moon and Stars, nothing could be more elegant, than from this very Circumſtance to take a further Occaſion of complimenting the Prince, by finding out another Reaſon of their Delay; *viz.* that thoſe bright Attendants (for the Poet ſuppos'd them endow'd with Senſe) ſtay'd the longer, that they might be the happy Spectators of *Cæſar*'s triumphal Entry. He then gives a new Turn to his Reflections, and thus concludes the Epigram:

Jam, Cæſar, vel nocte veni; ſient aſtra licebit,
Non deerit populo, Te veniente, dies.

Yet let not *Cæſar* wait the riſing Morn,
Or damp our Bleſſings till the Day's Return:
His Light ſhall cheer us with as bright a Ray,
And without *Phœbus* uſher in the Day.

This is ingenious enough, but a little of the boldeſt. The Prince of Lyric Poets is more modeſt upon the ſame Occaſion:

[1] *Lucem redde tuæ, Dux bone, patriæ;*
Inſtar veris enim, vultus ubi tuus

[1] Lib. IV. Od. 5.

Affulſit

Affulſit populo, gratior it dies,
Et ſoles melius nitent.

Ah! quickly come, and with you bring
A brighter Sun, a brighter Spring:
Plenty and Mirth with you appear,
The World looks gay, when you are here. *Oldſ.*

He does not ſay the Approach of *Cæſar* would reſtore the Day, but only increaſe it; that is, would add to its Gaiety and Luſtre: And true it is, that Men whoſe Breaſts are fill'd with Joy, think every Thing about them partakes of that Quality.

There are other Thoughts, which tho' founded more upon poetical Fiction than the former, yet come into the Number of true and elegant ones. Thus our forementioned *Martial*, in his Epitaph upon *Canace*, after having beautifully deſcrib'd the Diſeaſe of which the Lady died, in the following Verſes:

[w] —— *Horrida vultum*
Inficit, & tenero ſedit in ore lues;
Ipſaque crudeles ederunt oſcula morbi,
Nec data ſunt nigris tota labella rogis.

A horrid Cancer ſeiz'd her beauteous Face,
Prey'd o'er her Charms, and rifled ev'ry Grace;
Nor ſpar'd thoſe Lips that raviſh'd with a Kiſs,
The inexhauſted Treaſuries of Bliſs!

Thus goes on:

Si tam præcipiti fuerant ventura volatu,
Debuerant alia fata venire via:
Sed Mors vocis iter properavit claudere blandæ,
Ne poſſet duras flectere lingua Deas.

Determin'd Fate, with his unerring Dart,
Might, without mangling, have attack'd the Heart;
But knowing well her Voice would Life prolong,
He ſeiz'd the Pow'rs of her enchanting Tongue.

[w] Lib. XI. Epig. 92.

Theſe

Theſe Kinds of Fictions, tho' very numerous, are no ways repugnant to Reaſon, and have not only a Claim to our Pardon, but to our Praiſe and Imitation.

Ninth Lecture.

In theſe, and the like Inſtances, the great Care is, to have Truth for the Foundation of what we afterwards advance. As we ſee it is in the Example produced from *Martial*. We are allow'd in ſtricteſt Reaſon to deſcribe others Merit, or our own Grief, in Terms a little heighten'd: If the Lady, then, whoſe Death the Poet laments, had, in reality, a ſoft and melting Voice, he might juſtly ſay it was perſuaſive enough to have reſtrained the Hand of Fate, could it but have found an Utterance: But Death, fearful of its Power, had ſeiz'd that Paſſage, and cut off the Force of Eloquence. Thus far a Poet may be allow'd to proceed; but, in good Truth, very little farther. He treads here, as it were, upon a Precipice; and this Expreſſion of *Martial*, is, perhaps, the utmoſt Bound of poetic Truth; the next may carry him into the Ocean of falſe Thought. However, this is certain, that all theſe ingenious Devices muſt be built upon ſomething that has an Exiſtence in Nature, and that it is abſurd to make Fiction the Baſis, and the Superſtructure too; as they do, more eſpecially, who from the Heathen Mythology ſupply us with Fable in great abundance. The antiquated Stories of the Heathen Gods ought to afford Matter only for Compariſon and Alluſion, and even then ought to be brought in with Caution, and to be mention'd only as Beings once ſuppos'd to have an Exiſtence. In ſhort, even the lighteſt Excurſions of Wit ought to be founded upon Reality; and thoſe empty Trifles are juſtly contemn'd, which are neither Panegyric nor Satire, neither illuſtrate nor explain any Thing, but the wonderful Acuteneſs of the Writer.

Tho'

Tho' a beautiful Compoſition of Thought and Words is the greateſt Maſter-piece of Nature, yet 'tis poſſible for an Oration, or Poem, to be too full of them, tho' never ſo much diverſified. Whatever Subject, therefore, you endeavour to adorn, let not your Poem be loaded with Wit. Jewels have always been in Eſteem, and ever will be ſo; yet to ſee a Garment disfigur'd all over with different Sorts of them, would be matter of Ridicule, rather than Admiration; and the moſt elegant Epicure would be but little pleas'd with an Entertainment that conſiſted of nothing elſe but Dainties. The ſame Rule is not leſs applicable to Poetry, than Proſe; the Reaſon of it holds equally in both. Poetry, indeed, admits of greater Ornament, but right Reaſon always abhors Luxury, whether in Proſe or Verſe. The too great Plenty of whatever is exquiſite, does not gratify, ſo much as ſatiate both the Senſes and the Underſtanding; and what in itſelf is valuable, by Superabundance becomes ridiculous. By this faulty kind of Writing the Mind is depriv'd of that Refreſhment and Recreation it takes in paſſing to and fro from Things that are excellent, to thoſe that are leſs ſo; and of that Delight which ſprings from Surprize; neither of which it is capable of, where all Things appear with undiſtinguiſh'd Luſtre. 'Tis a fooliſh Ambition, therefore, to work up all the beautiful Thought and Diction you can poſſibly croud together. We ought always, indeed, to avoid in both whatever is mean or vulgar, and, as *Longinus*[x] ſays, is *below the Dignity of the Subject*; to be always, I ſay, above the Populace, tho' ſometimes plain, and without Ornament. It is impoſſible for a Writer, from the Nature of his Subject, to be upon the Sublime from one End to the other: Some Things muſt occur, that require the common Style, but if they did

[x] Περὶ ὕψους, § 43.

not,

not, the Rule ought ſtill to be obſerv'd, for the Reaſons I have before alledg'd. Let Authors take Example from Nature, who diverſifies the great Poem of the World with Spring and Summer. In each Seaſon, 'tis true, all Things appear pleaſant; but how much leſs would they be ſo, nay, how diſtaſteful, if the Fields were cover'd with nothing elſe but Flowers? Vivid and ſmiling they are throughout, but not all over beſet with Noſegays. Flowers grow in their proper and peculiar Soil; ſo the Ornaments of a Poem ſhould ſeem naturally to ariſe out of the Matter of it, not forced by Labour, but promoted only by proper Culture. We ought, indeed, to imitate Art, and it is no mean Specimen of it, when we intermix theſe Beauties ſo skilfully, that they mutually correſpond, and ſet off each other; in the ſame Manner that the Florift diſpoſes his parsy-colour'd Beds, and the Nymph her odorous Garlands.

[y] —— *Candida Nais*
Pallentes violas, & ſumma papavera carpens,
Narciſſum, & florem jungit beneolentis anethi.
Tum caſia, atque aliis intexens ſuavibus herbis,
Mollia luteola pingit vaccinia caltha.

For thee the lovely *Nais* crops the Head
Of Poppies, and the Violet's pale Flow'rs,
With the Narciſſus, and ſweet Aniſe join'd;
Then mingling Cinnamon, and other Herbs
Of fragrant Scent, with the ſoft Hyacinth,
The ſaffron Bloom of Marygolds adorns.

Afterwards,

[z] *Et vos, ô lauri, carpam, & te, proxima myrte;*
Sic poſitæ quoniam ſuaves miſcetis odores.

You, too, ye Laurels; and thee, Myrtle, next;
Becauſe thus mix'd, you fragrant Odours bland.

[y] Virg. Eclog. II. ℣ 46. [z] ℣ 54.

Beauty

Beauty in Writing may be consider'd as twofold: Either the *Elegant*, or *Sublime*. The latter is manifestly distinct from the former; for there may be Elegance often, where there is no Sublimity; but it may be question'd, on the other Hand, whether every Thing *sublime* is not *elegant*. To me, indeed, it seems not so; or, if we must determine otherwise, it must be said, that Elegance join'd with Sublimity is often a different Species of Elegance. Whatever, indeed, is *sublime*, is *beautiful*. So *Pallas* is describ'd by the Poets, but with a Beauty peculiar to herself, awful, majestic, surrounded with an amiable Grandeur, quite different from the Charms of *Venus*, who is possess'd with all the soft Attractives, who is all over elegant, but very little sublime. But however this Question be determined, in the Sequel of this Discourse I shall examine into the Properties of each of these Beauties distinctly, and afterwards join'd together.

That noble and happy Sublimity of Thought, which by *Longinus* is termed, [a] τὸ περὶ ἃς νοήσεις ἀδρεπήβολον, is impossible to be learn'd by Precept: 'Tis the Gift of Nature only, tho' it may be much assisted by Art. This peculiar Turn of Mind *Virgil* thus at once describes, and remarkably exemplifies:

[b] *Me vero primum dulces ante omnia Musæ,*
Quarum sacra fero, ingenti perculsus amore,
Accipiant, cœlique vias & sidera monstrent, &c.
Sin has ne possim naturæ accedere partes,
Frigidus obstiterit circum præcordia sanguis;
Rura mihi, & rigui placeant in vallibus amnes,
Flumina amem, silvasque inglorius.

Me may the Muses, whose vow'd Priest I am,
Smit with strong Passion for their sacred Song,

[a] Περὶ ὕψους, ỳ 8. [b] Geor. II. 475.

Dear

Dear above all to me, accept; and teach
The heav'nly Roads, the Motions of the Stars, *&c.*
But if the colder Blood
About my Heart forbid me to approach
So near to Nature, may the rural Fields,
And Streams obſcure, which glide along the Vales,
Delight me; Groves and Rivers may I love.

He ſhews us he is abundantly endow'd with that Strength of Imagination he pretends to want, and at the ſame Time gives us a Specimen of it.

The ſame muſt be ſaid of that Fire and Energy in Poetry, which *Longinus* calls [c] *τὸ σφοδρὸν, καὶ ἐνθουσιαστικὸν πάθος*, *viz.* that it is owing to the Indulgence of Nature, and to be regulated only, not acquir'd by Precept. All we can do, is to produce ſome Examples of it, and make a few Obſervations upon them. The firſt ſhall be that of *Virgil*, in the ſixth *Æneis*, where the Poet diſplays the ſacred Rage of the Sibyl, and his own:

[d] *Ventum erat ad limen; cum virgo, poſcere fata*
Tempus, ait: Deus, ecce! Deus. Cui talia fanti
Ante fores ſubito non vultus, non color unus,
Non comptæ manſere comæ; ſed pectus anhelum,
Et rabie fera corda tument; majorque videri,
Nec mortale ſonans; afflata eſt numine quando
Jam propiore Dei. Ceſſas in vota, preceſque,
Tros, ait, Æneа? Ceſſas?
And now they reach'd
The Portal: When the Virgin, 'Tis the Time
Now t' enquire the Doom of Fate; Behold,
The God, the God, ſhe cry'd. While thus ſhe ſpoke,
Before the Doors her Looks, her Colour chang'd,
Sudden; her Hair in wild Confuſion roſe.

[c] Περὶ ὕψους, ℣ 8. [d] ℣ 45.

Enthu-

Enthuſiaſtic Fury heav'd her Breaſt,
And throbbing Heart; more large her Form appear'd;
Nor ſpoke the mortal Accents; when inſpir'd
By the more preſent God. Doſt thou delay,
Trojan Æneas, thy Requeſts, and Vows?
Doſt thou delay? ſhe cry'd.

And after *Æneas* had ended his Supplication to her:

[e] *At Phœbi nondum patiens immanis in antro*
Bacchatur Vates, magnum ſi pectore poſſit
Excuſſiſſe Deum; tanto magis ille fatigat
Os rabidum, fera corda domans, fingitque premendo.

But impatient in her Grot
Apollo's ſwelling Prieſteſs wildly raves;
Reluctant, lab'ring from her Breaſt to heave
Th' incumbent God: So much the more he curbs
Her foamy Mouth, ſubdues her madding Heart,
And preſſing forms her.

And laſtly, at the End of the Sibyl's Anſwer:

[f] *Talibus ex adyto dictis Cumæa Sibylla*
Horrendas canit ambages, antroque remugit,
Obſcuris vera involvens: ea fræna furenti
Concutit, & ſtimulos ſub pectore vertit Apollo.

Thus the *Cumæan* Sibyl, from her Shrine,
Sings myſtic Verſe; and bellows in her Cave,
Involving Truth in Darkneſs: As ſhe foams,
Apollo ſhakes the Reins, and goads her Breaſt.

This is one Species of poetic *Pathos*, or Enthuſiaſm; *viz.* which conſiſts in the Marvellous, and raiſes Admiration, by impreſſing upon the Mind ſomething great, unuſual, and portentous, and is ſtyled by the *Greeks* ὁρμή, by the *Latins Impetus*, or *furor poeticus*. There are other Kinds of it, which excite

[e] ℣ 77. [f] ℣ 98.

Grief,

Grief, Pity, Terror, and work upon the other Paſſions. If the *Spirit* of the Poet is moſt admir'd in the former, the Reader's is at leaſt as much affected by the latter. And ſince it is the great Art of Poetry to work upon the Paſſions, it may not be improper to dwell a little upon this Branch of it. How ſweet is that Complaint of *Phyllis* to *Demophoon*, in *Ovid*? How wonderfully adapted to move Compaſſion?

[g] *Credidimus blandis, quorum tibi copia, verbis;*
Credidimus generi, nominibuſque tuis;
Credidimus lacrimis: an & hæ ſimulare docentur?
Hæ quoque habent artes; quaque jubentur, eunt.
Diis quoque credidimus; quo jam tot pignora nobis?
Parte ſatis potui qualibet inde capi.

On thy ſoft Speeches I with Rapture hung,
The boundleſs Treaſures of thy melting Tongue.
Thy Name I credited, thy Birth, thy Line:
Art thou by Falſhood Man, by Birth divine?
Thy Tears reſiſtleſs! do they flow by Art,
Th'obedient Tides of Nature, and the Heart!
Theſe have their Frauds, and find the ſubtle Path,
As you direct, to ſteal a Lover's Faith.
The Gods, too, I believ'd, by whom you ſwore;
Each Motive was too much, what needed more?

No one was a greater Maſter of this Secret than *Ovid*; none underſtood Nature more than he, or expreſs'd her various Conflicts better: And he has left us abundance of Inſtances of it in his *Epiſtles* and *Metamorphoſes*. To paſs over others, I ſhall produce only that Paſſage where he deſcribes the Paſſion of *Medea* for *Jaſon*:

[h] *Concipit interea validos Æetias ignes:*
Et luctata diu, poſtquam ratione furorem

[g] Ovid. Epiſt. II. ℣ 49. [h] Met. L. VII. ℣ 9.

Vincere

Vincere non potuit; Fruſtra, Medea, repugnas,
Neſcio quis deus obſtat, ait; mirumque, niſi hoc eſt,
Aut aliquod certe ſimile huic, quod amare vocatur.
Nam cur juſſa patris nimium mihi dura videntur?
Sunt quoque dura nimis: cur, quem modo denique vidi,
Ne pereat, timeo? Qua tanti cauſa timoris?
Excute virgineo conceptas pectore flammas,
Si potes, infelix; ſi poſſem, ſanior eſſem.
Sed trahit invitam nova vis; aliudque cupido,
Mens aliud ſuadet; video meliora, probeque,
Deteriora ſequor.

Mean while, *Medea*, ſeiz'd with fierce Deſire,
By Reaſon ſtrives to quench the raging Fire;
But ſtrives in vain: Some God, ſhe ſaid, withſtands,
And Reaſon's baffled Counſel countermands.
What unſeen Pow'r does this Diſorder move?
'Tis Love—at leaſt 'tis like what Men call Love.
Elſe wherefore ſhould the King's Commands appear
To me too hard? But ſo, indeed, they are.
Why ſhould I for a Stranger fear, leſt he
Should periſh, whom I did but lately ſee;
His Death, or Safety, what are they to me?
Wretch from thy Virgin Breaſt this Flame expel,
And ſoon—Oh! cou'd I, all wou'd then be well!
But Love, reſiſtleſs Love, my Soul invades;
Diſcretion this, Affection that perſuades.
I ſee the right, and I approve it, too;
Condemn the wrong—and yet the wrong purſue.
Tate and *Stoneſtreet.*

After this, the Poet wonderfully deſcribes the dubious Strife between Love and Shame, Reaſon and Affection, as he does in many other Places. I know, very well, that Objections have been rais'd againſt this very Paſſage I have cited, and that *Ovid* is compar'd

compar'd with *Apollonius Rhodius* and *Virgil*, even upon these Topics, much to his Disadvantage. I can't deny but that when he does best, he often falls short of that Sublimity in which he was naturally deficient; that when he shines most, he generally abounds with an unhappy Luxuriancy of Thought, disagreeable Repetitions, unseasonable and absurd Conceits; that his Style is loose and incorrect: However, let him have his due Praise, let him be allow'd to draw the Out-lines of Nature truly, tho' he does not keep accurately to every Feature of her.

But if you want Perfection upon this Head, consult *Virgil*, who, as he excels in all other Kinds of Writing, so, especially, in describing and moving the Passions, in the fourth *Æneis* especially; which may with Justice be styled an *Epic Tragedy*. And since no Age, Nation, or Language, has yet produced a Work that lays open so wonderfully the various Tumults of the Soul; I shall perform, perhaps, no disagreeable Office, if I lay before you an Epitome of this Part of it, so far as relates to the Passions.

In the Beginning, the unfortunate Queen, in Conversation with her Sister, thus discovers the Effects of *Love:*

[i] *Anna soror, quæ me suspensam insomnia terrent?*
Quis novus hic nostris successit sedibus hospes?
Quam sese ore ferens! quam forti pectore, & armis!
What Dreams, my dearest *Anna*, discompose
My Rest? What wond'rous Stranger at our Court
Is here arriv'd! how God-like he appears!
In Mien how graceful! and how brave in Arms!

And a few Lines after:

[k] *Anna (fatebor enim) miseri post fata Sichæi*
Conjugis, & sparsos fraterna cæde penates;

[i] ℣ 9. [k] ℣ 20.

Solus

Solus hic inflexit ſenſus, animumque labantem
Impulit; agnoſco veteris veſtigia flammæ.

My Sifter, (for to thee I will diſcloſe
My inmoſt Thoughts) ſince poor *Sichæus* fell,
And with his Blood, ſpilt by a Brother's Hand,
Sprinkled our Houſehold Gods; this only Man
Has warp'd my Inclinations, and unfix'd
My ſtagg'ring Reſolution: I perceive
The Signs and Tokens of my former Flame.

Now *Shame*, on the other Hand, exerts its Power, and claims to be heard, in Oppoſition to Love:

[1] *Sed mihi vel tellus, optem, prius ima dehiſcat,*
Vel Pater omnipotens adigat me fulmine ad umbras,
Pallentes umbras Erebi, noctemque profundam;
Ante, Pudor, quam te violem, aut tua jura reſolvam:

But may the yawning Earth devour me quick,
Or *Jove* with Thunder ſtrike me to the Shades,
Pale Shades of *Erebus*, and Night profound;
E'er, Modeſty, I break thro' thy Reſtraints,
Or violate thy Laws.

She then *complains* of *Æneas*'s concealing his Departure; ſhe *expoſtulates* with him of the Injury he intended her; and full, at the ſame Time, of *Fear* and *Grief*, ſhe thus endeavours to work upon his *Compaſſion*:

[2] *Diſſimulare etiam ſperaſti, perfide, tantum*
Poſſe nefas? tacituſque mea decedere terra?
Nec te noſter amor, nec te data dextera quondam,
Nec moritura tenet crudeli funere Dido? &c.

And could'ſt thou hope, Perfidious, to conceal
So black a Crime? and ſilent leave my Coaſts?
Cannot my Love, nor thy once plighted Faith,
Nor *Dido*'s cruel, and untimely Death,
Detain thee?

[1] ℣ 25. [2] ℣ 305.

But as ſoon as ſhe hears *Æneas* openly declare his firm Reſolution, from Tears and Intreaties ſhe burſts out into *Paſſion, Rage*, and *Phrenzy:*

[a] *Talia dicentem jamdudum averſa tuetur,*
Huc illuc volvens oculos, totumque pererrat
Luminibus tacitis, & ſic accenſa profatur.
Nec tibi Diva parens, generis nec Dardanus auctor,
Perfide; ſed duris genuit te cautibus horrens
Caucaſus, Hyrcanæque admorunt ubera tigres.

Thus, while he ſpoke, ſhe ſilently intent,
Ey'd him averſe; and roll'd her glaring Balls
Around; from Head to Foot ſurvey'd him o'er,
Speechleſs a while; and thus her Rage reply'd:
Nor art thou of a Goddeſs-mother born;
Nor is thy Birth from *Dardanus* deriv'd,
Perfidious Wretch: But *Caucaſus*, with Rocks
Horrid diſclos'd thee from its flinty Sides,
And fierce *Hyrcanian* Tygers gave thee Suck.

Throughout the whole Speech (every Line of which is beautiful beyond all Compariſon) ſhe exclaims, interrogates, calls Gods and Men to witneſs, loads her Lover with Threats and Curſes; in ſhort, the Tempeſt of her Soul runs ſo high, as if it never more would know a Calm. What, then, ſays *Dido*, when ſhe appears next?

[b] *Improbe Amor, quid non mortalia pectora cogis?*
Ire iterum in lacrimas, iterum tentare precando,
Cogitur, & ſupplex animos ſubmittere amori.

Cruel Love,
To what Extremes does not thy tyrant Pow'r
Urge mortal Breaſts? Again diſſolv'd in Tears,
Spight of her Rage and Pride, again ſhe tries
Suppliant Intreaties, and ſubmiſſive bows
Her haughty Soul to Love.

[a] *v* 362. [b] *v* 412.

After

After this, ſhe implores, conjures her Siſter to be her Mediator in this momentous Affair, and to convey to *Æneas* her ſofteſt Entreaties; than which, nothing can be more pathetic, and adapted to move *Compaſſion:*

[p] *Hunc ego ſi potui tantum ſperare dolorem,*
Et perferre, ſoror, potero. Miſeræ hoc tamen unum
Exequere, Anna, mihi; ſolam nam perfidus ille
Te colere, arcanos animi tibi credere ſenſus;
Sola viri molles aditus, & tempora nôras.
I, ſoror; atque hoſtem ſupplex affare ſuperbum.
Could I have e'er expected ſuch a Blow
Of cruel Fate as this; my Soul could then
Have borne it: Yet this only Favour grant
Thy wretched Siſter; for that faithleſs Man
To thee, alone, uncommon Rev'rence paid,
Truſted his Secrets with thee; thou, alone,
Didſt know the ſoft Approaches to his Soul,
And all the proper Seaſons of Addreſs:
Go, Siſter; and this Meſſage ſuppliant bear.

In the foregoing Speech ſhe broke out into theſe Reproaches:

[q] *Nuſquam tuta fides: ejectum littore, egentem,*
Excepi, & regni demens in parte locavi;
Amiſſam claſſem, ſocios à morte reduxi.
Heu! furiis incenſa feror, &c.
True Faith is no where to be found. Him toſs'd
On Shore, of all Things indigent, I here
Receiv'd, and made him Partner of my Throne;
(Fool that I was) repair'd his ſhatter'd Fleet,
And hoſpitably ſav'd his Friends from Death.
Furies diſtract me.

But in what different Terms does ſhe expoſtulate in this?

[p] ℣ 419. [q] ℣ 373.

[f] *Non ego cum Danais Trojanam exſcindere gentem*
Aulide juravi, claſſemve ad Pergama miſi;
Nec patris Anchiſæ cineres, manesve revelli:
Cur mea dicta negat duras demittere in aures?
I never did conſpire
At *Aulis* with the *Greeks*, to overturn
The *Trojan* State, nor ſent a Fleet to *Troy*;
Nor e'er diſturb'd his bury'd Father's Duſt.
Why does he ſtop his unrelenting Ears
To my Intreaties?

Before, ſhe had thus expreſs'd her Rage:

[g] —— *Neque te teneo, neque dicta refello.*
I, ſequere Italiam ventis; pete regna per undas;
Spero equidem mediis (ſi quid pia numina poſſunt)
Supplicia hauſurum ſcopulis, &c.
I nor detain thee, nor refel thy Words.
Away for *Latium* by the Winds; go, ſeek
Thy Kingdom o'er the Waves. For me, I hope,
If the juſt Gods have Pow'r, thou wilt receive
Thy due Reward among the Rocks.

Behold, now, another Strain!

[h] *Quo ruit? extremum hoc miſeræ det munus amanti;*
Expectet facilemque fugam, ventoſque ferentes.
Non jam conjugium antiquum, quod prodidit, oro;
Nec pulchro ut Latio careat, regnumque relinquat;
Tempus inane peto, requiem, ſpatiumque furori,
Dum mea me victam doceat fortuna dolere.
Whither does he fly
So haſty? This laſt Favour let him grant
To his unhappy Lover; let him wait
An eaſy Voyage, and permitting Winds.
I now no more petition him to yield
The Rites of Nuptials, which he has betray'd;

[f] *Æn.* 4. 425. [g] *Æn.* 4. 380. [h] *Æn.* 4. 492.

Nor

Nor urge him to relinquiſh his gay Hopes
Of *Italy*, and Empire: All I beg,
Is but a ſoothing Interval, ſome Reſt,
And Reſpite to my Paſſion; till my Fate
Shall to Misfortune reconcile my Soul,
Subdu'd by Grief, and teach me how to mourn.

That Man muſt be as void of Senſe, as of Humanity, that does not feel in himſelf the ſtrongeſt Emotions of Pity and Admiration, of Grief and Pleaſure, when he reads ſo moving a Complaint; than which, I may venture to pronounce, there is not a greater Maſterpiece, either in Art or Nature.

I might juſtly fear lying under the Imputation of Prolixity in citing theſe Paſſages, if the Beauty of them did not compenſate for their Number. As no one ever touch'd the Paſſions like *Virgil*, you'll forgive the Liberty I have taken in recalling to your Mind ſo many pleaſing Inſtances of his Power.

What *Longinus* calls [v] φαντασίαι, and others, as he tells us, εἰδωλοποιΐαι, the *Roman* Writers ſtyle *Viſions*, or *Imaginations*, and the modern *Images*. Theſe, then, operate, "when (as *Longinus* [w] ſpeaks) a Man "has ſo ſtrong an Imagination of the Things he de-"ſcribes, that he ſeems to be in Tranſport, as it "were, to behold them with his own Eyes, and "places them before thoſe of his Hearers." What *Longinus* adds immediately afterwards, in relation to theſe Images, I muſt confeſs I don't rightly comprehend, or (with all Deference to ſo great Authority) I cannot aſſent to. Ὡς δ' ἑτερόν τι ἡ ῥητορικὴ φαντασία βούλεται, καὶ ἑτερὸν ἡ παρὰ ποιηταῖς, οὐκ ἂν λάθοι σε. οὐδ' ὅτι τῆς μὲν ἐν ποιήσει τέλος ἐστὶν ἔκπληξις, τῆς δ' ἐν λόγοις ἐνάργεια. Which *Tollius* thus paraphraſtically tranſlates: "You cannot be igno-"rant, I ſuppoſe, that Oratorical Viſions intend

[v] Περὶ ὕψους, § 15. [w] Ibid.

" one Thing, and Poetical another; that the Aim " of the latter is to affect the Hearers with " Terror; of the former to expreſs every Thing " ſo ſtrongly, that it may be rather ſeen, than " heard by the Audience. The one we may pro- " perly call Evidence, or Illuſtration; the other " Conſternation, or Amazement." I own, I ſay, this is what I cannot well digeſt; for neither is it true that the Images, which Poetry impreſſes, affect us with Terror only, for all Sorts of Images are impreſs'd by Poetry; nor is it the peculiar Property of Oratory *to expreſs every Thing ſo ſtrongly, that it may be rather ſeen, than heard by the Audience*; ſince Poetry has a much larger Share in this Province than Oratory. The only Difference between them in this Particular is, that all Images are impreſs'd more *ſtrongly* by the one; but all are *truly* impreſs'd by both. This is a Difficulty in *Longinus*, which not one of his numerous Commentators has touch'd upon. If, therefore, I am fallen into any Miſtake, I hope I ſhall be the eaſier pardoned, as I have none of the Helps of the Learned to conduct me out of it. But however that be, all are agreed that the Images excited, both by Oratory and Poetry, ſtrike the Mind with a ſudden Force. To prove this, *Longinus* recites the Speech of *Oreſtes*[x], where he cries out, that he ſees his Mother and the Furies ſtand before him; which *Virgil* has wonderfully imitated, in the following Paſſage:

[y] *Eumenidum veluti demens videt agmina Pentheus,*
Et ſolem geminum, & duplices ſe oſtendere Thebas:
Aut Agamemnonius, ſcenis agitatus, Oreſtes,
Armatam facibus matrem, & ſerpentibus atris,
Cum fugit, ultriceſque ſedent in limine Diræ.

[x] Ibid. [y] Æn. IV. 469.

So

So raving *Pentheus* Troops of Furies ſees,
Two Suns, and double *Thebes*: So mad with Guilt,
Oreſtes, agitated on the Stage,
Flies from his Mother's Ghoſt, with Torches arm'd,
And black infernal Snakes; revengeful Fiends
Sit in the Doors, and intercept his Flight.

As I have occaſionally mention'd this remarkable Place, it may not be amiſs to obſerve, that Images are no where better impreſs'd, than throughout that Deſcription, where *Dido* is repreſented under the Conflicts of Love, and diſmay'd with Prodigies. I ſhall only cite one Part of it, and the rather, becauſe it contains a mere intellectual Idea not ſubject to the Senſes, which yet is as clearly impreſs'd, as if it were the proper Object of them: An infallible Proof of the Skill of the Painter.

[z] —— *Agit ipſe furentem*
In ſomnis ferus Æneas; ſemperque relinqui
Sola ſibi, ſemper longam incomitata videtur
Ire viam, & Tyrios deſerta quærere terra.

In her Dreams
Cruel *Æneas* perſecutes her Soul
To Madneſs. Still abandon'd to herſelf,
Cheerleſs, without a Guide, ſhe ſeems to go
A long, a tedious Journey, and to ſeek
Her *Tyrian* Subjects on deſerted Coaſts.

To conclude; in a word, every Conception of the Mind, join'd to a beautiful Deſcription, is an Image. I cannot produce a better Proof of this, than that Paſſage in *Homer*, where *Aſtyanax* ſhrinks at the Sight of his Father array'd in Armour.

[a] Ὡς εἰπὼν, ὃ παιδὸς ὀρέξατο φαίδιμος Ἕκτωρ, κ.λ.

Thus having ſpoke, th' illuſtrious Chief of *Troy*
Stretch'd his fond Arms to claſp the lovely Boy.

[z] *Æn.* IV. 465. [a] Il. VI. 466.

The Babe clung crying to his Nurſe's Breaſt,
Scar'd at the dazling Helm, and nodding Creſt.
*Pope.**

To which may be added, the following Deſcription of *Virgil*, out of innumerable others:

[b] *—— Viridi fœtam Mavortis in antro*
Procubuiſſe lupam, geminos huic ubera circum
Ludere pendentes pueros, & lambere matrem
Impavidos; illam tereti cervice reflexam
Mulcere alternos, & corpora fingere lingua.

In the moſſy Cave of *Mars*
A female Wolf lay ſuckling; at her Teats
Two ſporting Infants hung, and lick'd their Dam,
Intrepid: She her ſleek round Neck reclin'd,
Smooth'd them, by Turns, and form'd them with her Tongue.

And that Night Piece of his, in the ſeventh *Æneis*, where we ſee the Ship under Sail, by Moon-ſhine:

[c] *Aſpirant auræ in noctem; nec candida curſum*
Luna negat; ſplendet tremulo ſub lumine pontus.
Proxima Circææ raduntur littora terræ,
Dives inacceſſos ubi Solis filia lucos
Aſſiduo reſonat cantu, tectiſque ſuperbis
Uritur odoratam nocturna in lumina cedrum,
Arguto tenues percurrens pectine telas.
Hinc exaudiri gemitus, iræque leonum
Vincla recuſantum, & ſera ſub nocte rudentum;
Setigerique ſues, atque in præſepibus urſi
Sævire, ac formæ magnorum ululare luporum.

A Breeze at Night
Springs freſh; nor does the ſilver Moon deny

* See his Note on the Place, ℣ 595.
[b] Æn. VIII. 630. [c] ℣ 8.

Her

Her Beams, which tremble on the glimm'ring Waves.
Next, coasting, close by *Circe*'s Shores they sail;
Where she, the wealthy Daughter of the Sun,
With ceaseless singing makes the Groves resound,
Groves inaccessible; and in the Rooms
Of her proud Palace, for nocturnal Light,
Sweet Cedar burns: While thro' the slender Web
Her whistling Shuttle flies along the Loom.
Hence Groans are heard; the Noise of Lions, fierce,
Rebellious to their Chains, and roaring loud
In Dead of Night; the Grunt of bristly Boars;
The Rage of Bears, reluctant, in their Stalls;
And huge portentous Forms of howling Wolves.

Tenth Lecture.

It would be entering upon too large a Field, to enquire into all the Variations, and Turns of Thought and Style, which Verse and Prose are capable of: Such as, Interrogations, Exclamations, the different Disposition of Tropes and Figures, the elegant Repetition of Words, the no less elegant Abruptness in Sentences, the Want of Connexion, Apostrophe, Prosopopœia, the Change of Numbers, Persons, Cases, Tenses, and a Multitude of other Incidents, which are reducible to Thought, as well as Style. Since the Variety of these is as infinite, as their Elegance is exquisite, it is impossible to explain them all by Rules, or illustrate them by Example. *Longinus* has mentioned some few, and our modern Books of Rhetoric are full of them. But the Want of Precept will be abundantly compensated to the Learner, by a good Taste, and a diligent Application to the Study of the best Authors.

Among the many Embellishments of Writing, few are attended with greater Beauty than *Antithesis*.

The Reaſon is obvious, becauſe Contraries illuſtrate, and recommend each other by Compariſon. Of this the following Paſſage in *Virgil* is a remarkable Inſtance; where we have a beautiful Irony and Antitheſis, at the ſame Time:

[d] *Egregiam vero laudem, & ſpolia ampla refertis,*
Tuque, puerque tuus, magnum & memorabile nomen;
Una dolo Divûm ſi fœmina victa duorum eſt.

Prodigious Trophies you indeed have gain'd,
You, and your Boy; vaſt Praiſe, a deathleſs Name;
If by the Fraud of two celeſtial Pow'rs
One Woman be ſubdu'd.

Near a-kin to it, is that Antitheſis in *Ovid:*

[e] *—— Quæ gloria veſtra eſt;*
Si juvenes puerum, ſi multi fallitis unum?

Will you, my Friends, united Strength employ,
Againſt one many, Men, againſt a Boy?

When the Thoughts are thus ſet againſt each other, they appear with Energy, and ſtrike the Mind with redoubled Force.

Another Elegance in a Writer, is to convey the whole of his Idea to the Reader, by expreſſing only ſome Circumſtances of it.

[f] *Dixerat; atque illam media inter talia ferro*
Collapſam aſpiciunt comites, enſemque cruore
Spumantem, ſparſaſque manus.

Thus, while ſhe ſpoke, th' Attendants ſaw her fall,
The Sword all frothing, and her Hands beſmear'd
With Blood.

Thus *Virgil* deſcribes *Dido* killing herſelf: An inferior Poet, no doubt, would have repreſented her in the fatal Act, ruſhing upon the Sword with all her

[d] L. IV. ℣ 93. [e] Met. L. III. ℣ 654.
[f] Æn. L. IV. ℣ 663.

Strength,

Strength, the Blood guſhing out, and that Part of her Body which receiv'd the Wound expos'd to View. But how much better are all theſe paſſed over, and ſuggeſted to us only by their Adjuncts and Effects? There is another Example, of this kind, in the fourth *Georgic*, which is truly wonderful:

[g] *Illa quidem, dum te fugeret per flumina præceps,*
Immanem ante pedes hydrum moritura puella
Servantem ripas alta non vidit in herba.
At chorus æqualis Dryadum clamore ſupremes
Implerunt montes; flerunt Rhodopeiæ arces, &c.

She doom'd to Death, while, heedleſs, thee ſhe fled,
Along the River's Side, before her Steps,
In the high Graſs ſaw not the monſtrous Snake,
Which, unperceiv'd, lay lurking on the Bank.
But all the beauteous Quire of Woodland Nymphs,
Her Fellows, fill'd with Shrieks the lofty Hills;
The *Rhodopeian* Mountains wept, *&c.*

How conciſe, and ingenious! This Artifice of inſinuating only the Senſe to the Reader, is ſo uſeful in Epigram, that the whole Thought often turns upon it. Thus in that of *Martial*:

[h] *Pexatus pulchre, rides meu, Zoile, trita;*
Sunt hæc trita quidem, Zoile; ſed mea ſunt.

My Threadbare Coat is ſcorn'd by Liv'ry-*John*:
'Tis true, 'tis Threadbare—but it is my own.

The Turn, you ſee, is witty, and facetious! But how poor a Joke had it been, if the Poet had only ſaid, however true it was, that the Clothes which *Zoilus* wore were not his own? But I fear, I tranſgreſs the very Rule I am recommending: I ſhall therefore add no more, than only to remind the Reader, that what I have ſaid under another Head, might more properly come under this, *viz. That the Mind of Man does*

[g] ℣ 456. [h] Lib. II. Epig. 58. [i] P. 56.

not love to have too minute a Detail of Particulars; but takes a Pleaſure in having Room for Imagination, and in forming a Judgment of what is not expreſs'd, from what is.

And ſince I have caſually mention'd Tranſitions, I would here obſerve, that the Elegance of them is equal to their Difficulty: The great Secret conſiſts either in digreſſing of a *ſudden* to ſome new Subject, and giving the Reader the Pleaſure of a Surprize; and yet continuing on the Thread of the Diſcourſe ſo artfully, that he may admire a *Connection*, where, at firſt, there ſeem'd to be none: Or in ſuch a gradual Tranſition from Thought to Thought, of near Affinity with each other, that the Mind may be imperceptibly led to a very different Subject, without being ſenſible of the intermediate Steps of the Digreſſion. Thus, in the Rainbow, the neighbouring Colours are ſo like each other, that 'tis hard to ſay where this ends, or that begins; yet there's a wide Difference, if we leave out the intermediate Shades, and compare the Rays of the two Extremes. My Meaning, perhaps, will appear clearer from Example. *Horace* begins his 29th Ode, of the third Book, in the following Manner:

Tyrrhena regum progenies, tibi
Non ante verſo lene merum cado,
Cum flore, Mecænas, roſarum,
Preſſa tuis balanus capillis
Jamdudum apud me eſt, &c.

My noble Lord, of Royal Blood,
That from the *Tuſcan* Monarchs flow'd,
I have a Cask ne'er pierc'd before;
My Garlands wreath'd, my Crowns are made,
My Roſes pluck'd to grace thy Head;
As fair and ſweet as e'er *Præneſte* bore.

And concludes it thus:

Non

Non eſt meum, ſi mugiat Africis
Malus procellis, ad miſeras preces
Decurrere, & votis paciſci,
Ne Cypriæ, Tyriæque, merces
Addant avaro divitias mari:
Tunc me biremis præſidio ſcaphæ
Tutum per Ægæos tumultus
Aura feret, geminuſque Pollux.

When ſpreading Sails rough Tempeſts tear,
I make no lamentable Pray'r;
I do not bargain with the Gods,
Nor offer coſtly Sacrifice
To ſave my precious *Tyrian* Dyes
From adding Riches to the greedy Floods.
E'en 'midſt theſe Storms I'll ſafely ride,
My Bark ſhall ſtem the higheſt Tide,
Tho' Tempeſts toſs, and th' Ocean raves;
Caſtor ſhall gather gentle Gales,
And *Pollux* fill my ſpreading Sails,
And bear me ſafe thro' the *Ægæan* Waves. *Creech.*

Between the Beginning and Ending, conſider'd in themſelves, how wide a Difference? And yet, if we examine the Gradation of Thought thro' the whole Ode, we ſhall ſee the moſt elegant Connection. In the Beginning, the Poet invites his Stateſman Friend to Supper: "I have prepar'd every Thing for your "Reception, ſays he; leave, for a While, the City, "the Buſineſs and Riches of it; 'tis a Pleaſure often "to Men of high Station, to partake of the Change "of Low Life. Forget Politics for a While, and "be not over anxious for the Nation's Welfare. "Providence conceals Futurity from us Mortals: "Let us therefore, in Prudence, make the beſt "of the preſent; all elſe is carry'd down by the "Stream of Time, and what is paſt returns no more. "Fortune is fickle; I am pleas'd, when ſhe ſmiles;

"but

" but diſregard her Frowns, contented with my Po-
" verty and Virtue. Care is the inſeparable At-
" tendant of Riches; I compound to want the one,
" that I may be ſecure from the other. I have no
" Buſineſs, when Storms roar, to fall into Tears,"
&c. Behold a Chain connected, and yet conceal'd with the greateſt Art.

Sometimes it is neceſſary that the Tranſition ſhould appear open, and deſign'd; but often otherwiſe. In the following Paſſage, we ſhall ſee a Specimen of either Sort; I mean, of the formal, and of the ſudden Tranſition. *Turnus* having, in the eleventh *Æneis*, had a good many Words with *Drances*, and in great Paſſion thrown out theſe, among the reſt,

[k] *Nunquam animam talem dextra hac (abſiſte moveri)*
Amittes; habitet tecum, & ſit pectore in iſto.
A Soul like that (diſmiſs
Thy Terror) by this Hand thou ne'er ſhalt loſe;
There let it dwell, and in that Breaſt remain.

thus turns his Diſcourſe to the King:

Nunc ad Te, & tua, magne Pater, conſulta reverter.
Si nullam noſtris ultra ſpem ponis in armis,
Si tam deſerti ſumus, ut ſemel agmine verſo
Funditus occidimus, nec habet fortuna regreſſum;
Oremus pacem, & dextras tendamus inermes.
Quanquam ô! ſi ſolitæ quicquam virtutis adeſſet;
Ille mihi ante alios fortunatuſque laborum,
Egregiuſque animi, qui, ne quid tale videret,
Procubuit moriens, & humum ſemel ore momordit.
To you, great Monarch, and to your Debates,
I now return. If you no more repoſe
Hope in our Arms; if by one Battle loſt,
We periſh whole, and Fortune knows no Change;

[k] *Æneis* 11. ℣ 407.

Let

Let us beg Peace, and ſtretch our Hands unarm'd.
(Yet Oh! did any of our priſtine Worth
And Virtue ſtill remain; that Man to me
Would in his glorious Toils moſt bleſt appear,
Who, rather than behold a Thing like this,
Fell once for all, and dying bit the Ground.)

Reverence due to Majeſty requir'd that *Turnus* ſhould direct his Diſcourſe from *Drances* to the King, by ſome ſolemn Addreſs. But after *dextras tendamus inermes*, to *Quanquam ô! ſi ſolitæ quicquam virtutis adeſſet*, the Tranſition is ſudden, and unexpected. The Mind, by this Means, is tranſported from one Contrary to another; a ſure Indication of the Force of Eloquence, and of its powerful Operation on its Hearers.

In Narrations 'tis no ſmall Art to make a Tranſition from one Fact to another: Several Inſtances of this, we have in *Ovid's Metamorphoſes*, the Nature of which Work requir'd them; where the Connection, indeed, is ſometimes neat and artful, ſometimes hard and forced, not to ſay ridiculous.

Under this Head we may reckon thoſe Excurſions of another kind, in which the Poet, by ſome ſudden Alluſion or Compariſon, diverts from his Subject to a new Matter, and immediately returns to it again. I ſhall explain myſelf better by Example. *Juvenal*, deſcribing the various Inconveniencies of the City, mentions theſe, among the reſt:

[1] —— *Rhedarum tranſitus arcto*
Vicorum inflexu, & ſtantis convicia mandræ,
Eripiunt ſomnum Druſo, vituliſque marinis.

The Drover who his Fellow Drover meets
In narrow Paſſages of winding Streets;

[1] Sat. III. 236.

The

The Waggoners that curſe their ſtanding Teams,
Wou'd wake ev'n drowſy *Druſus* from his Dreams.
Dryden.

His Intent, as I ſaid, was to recount the Diſadvantages of a City Life; and mentioning, among them, the Obſtructions in the Streets, from Chairs and Coaches, he takes Occaſion, by the bye, to reproach the Sloth and Lazineſs of *Druſus*. So again, enumerating the Miſeries of Old Age, he adds;

[m] —— *Circumfilit, agmine facto,*
Morborum omne genus; quorum ſi nomina quæras
Promptius expediam, quot amaverit Hippia mœchos,
Quot Themiſon ægros Autumno occiderit uno,
Quot Baſilus ſocios, quot circumſcripſerit Hirrus
Pupillos, &c.

In fine, he wears no Limb about him ſound:
With Sores and Sickneſſes belleaguer'd round:
Ask me their Names, I ſooner cou'd relate
How many Drudges on ſalt *Hippia* wait;
What Crouds of Patients the Town Doctor kills,
Or how, laſt Fall, he rais'd the Weekly Bills;
What Provinces by *Baſilus* were ſpoil'd,
What Herds of Heirs by Guardians are beguil'd.
Dryden.

Theſe Excurſions are chiefly ſuitable to *Satire*; and there's no Branch of it attended with greater Wit and Poignancy.

I have not Room here, to treat of *Compariſons* in the Manner they deſerve; they being ſo various, that they would require an entire Diſſertation. When they are ill drawn, nothing is more ridiculous; when well, nothing more beautiful. No kind of Style is excluded from them, and they are not only an Ornament, but often an Illuſtration of the Sub-

[m] Sat. X. 218.

ject.

ject. They ought always to appear natural, never forced, or far fetch'd. Avoid, therefore, the Fault of thoſe Writers, who find out what they call *Similies* firſt, and afterwards Matter to apply to them. Not that they are guilty of it, whoſe Compariſons don't in every Reſpect coincide with what they were brought to illuſtrate. Even the moſt elegant of them agree ſometimes with the Deſcription but in one Adjunct. Thus *Virgil*, in the eighth *Æneis:*

[a] *Dixerat; & niveis hinc atque hinc Diva lacertis*
Cunctantem amplexu molli fovet: ille repente
Accepit ſolitam flammam; notuſque medullas
Intravit calor, & labefacta per oſſa cucurrit.
Haud ſecus atque olim tonitru cum rupta coruſco
Ignea vina micans percurrit lumine nimbos.

She ſaid; and round him threw her ſnowy Arms,
And warm'd him, wav'ring, with a ſoft Embrace:
He ſoon receives the wonted Flame, which flies
Swift thro' his Marrow, and his melting Bones;
As when in Thunder, lanc'd along the Sky,
A Streak of Fire runs ſtreaming thro' the Clouds.

Upon a nice Scrutiny, the Parallel between Love and Thunder will hold but very little: And yet no good Judge, I believe, will diſpute the Elegance of the above Compariſon.

On this Head our Moderns ſeem to excel the Ancients, and to have found out an Uſe of Compariſons which they were utter Strangers to. Theirs are merely ornamental; ours often contain the Points of Epigram, the Jibes of Satire, and the Banters of Comedy; an Art which *Ovid*, *Martial*, *Juvenal*, *Horace* and *Terence* knew very little of. It will not be allow'd me to produce Inſtances here; but innumerable I could produce, if a Mixture of different Languages, and eſpecially of our own,

[a] *Æneis* 387.

would

would not ſound diſagreeable in theſe *Latin* Diſſertations[n]. 'Tis true, Tragic and Epic Poets ought totally to avoid theſe witty Alluſions; which are below the Severity of their Style, and the Dignity of their Compoſitions. The Compariſons that ſerve for Illuſtration only, come within their Province; ſuch as we meet with very frequently in *Homer* and *Virgil:* Tho' (to ſay the Truth) even the beſt Writers among the Ancients ſeem on this Head to labour under a Poverty of Matter. In the Deſcription of a Battle, for Inſtance, the Similes of a Lion, a Bull, a Serpent, an Eagle, and other Animals of the fiercer kind, recur too frequently under ſome ſmall Variations. But in After-Ages the Increaſe of Arts, and Sciences, and of Religion more particularly, open'd a new Field, which has miniſter'd abundantly not only to the Emolument of Mankind in general, but in this, and in all other Reſpects, to the Refinement of Wit.

If I muſt give my Opinion of thoſe *luxurious Compariſons* that deviate from the Subject, which *Homer*, chiefly, among the Ancients, and *Milton*, among the Moderns, run into; I muſt confeſs, they neither deſerve Commendation, nor are capable of Defence. But as they have the Sanction of ſo great Authority, it is not for me to paſs Judgment on them, but leave every one to follow his own.

If I remember right, there are few or no Similes in the Tragedies of the ancient Poets. Among the Moderns, no kind of Writing abounds more with them; and it muſt be own'd, they are often much to be admir'd: But very different are ſome of theſe; ſuch, in particular, as are introduced uttered by Perſons labouring under the Height of Paſſion, or in the Agonies of Death; than which, nothing can be more abſurd, or unpardonable.

[n] See, more eſpecially, Mr. *Waller*'s Poems.

As

As I have caſually mention'd this Error in Writing, I would farther obſerve, your *pretty Thoughts*, as they are commonly call'd, are neither ſuitable in a Paſſion, nor proper to raiſe one; they only ſerve in Deſcriptions to play upon the Imagination, not to put the Affections in Motion. A Breaſt ſtruggling with Anger, Grief, or Deſire, is little ſollicitous to expreſs its Anguiſh in fine wrought Turns of Wit, which will never be able to move the Reader to any Thing elſe but Madneſs at the Author's Folly. The plainer Commotions of the Mind are expreſs'd, the better; here the chief Elegance is to want Ornament, and 'tis the great Maſter-piece of Art to conceal itſelf in repreſenting Nature. Some Figures, indeed, are not only allowable in theſe Caſes, but neceſſary; thoſe, in particular, which impreſs upon the Mind the various Conflicts of the Soul; for ſuch are the Language of Perſons who feel theſe Tumults, tho' they were never taught to expreſs them by the Rules of Rhetoric. But Metaphors and Antitheſes, and all Decorations of that kind, muſt be us'd ſparingly, excepting only thoſe Metaphors which Orators ſometimes call forth to expreſs their Rage, with all the Fire of Eloquence. This I the rather obſerve, that I might not ſeem to contradict *Longinus*; who, ſpeaking of a Multitude of Metaphors, ſays[a], they are then moſt uſeful, *when the Paſſions ſwell like a Torrent.* He produces an Inſtance out of *Demoſthenes*, where the Orator indeed appears in Agitation; but ſtill they are different from thoſe we are now ſpeaking of, and not ſo much the Effect of Nature, as of Art: And even here the Metaphors are far from being bold, nor much diſtorted from their literal Senſe. 'Tis certain, *Longinus* did not propoſe this as a *general* Rule; nor is it poſſible to repreſent thoſe Throws and Labours

[a] Περὶ ὕψους, § 32.

of

of the Soul in Oratory, which appear in Tragic and Epic Characters; where Joy, Grief, and Anger, glow more intenſely, as well as more naturally. But if the Orator feels the ſame Emotions, and in the ſame Degree, it is certain he muſt abſtain from the abundant uſe of Metaphors.

Eleventh Lecture.

Before I conclude this Diſſertation, I would lay before my Audience, as clear an Idea of the different Kinds of Thought which have not yet been touch'd upon, as Words can convey, and ſo nice a Subject will admit of. The *Mordacity* of the *ſevere* and *joceſe* Satire, has been already deſcrib'd, and ſome Examples produc'd of each.

There are Thoughts, likewiſe, of the *delicate* Kind, whoſe Excellence does not conſiſt in their *Acuteneſs*, but in an artful and agreeable Turn; which don't ſtrike the Imagination at once with Wonder; but move it gently, with a more even Tenor. In this ſoft Strain, *Phædra* begins her Epiſtle to her dear *Hippolytus:*

[p] *Qua, niſi Tu dederis, caritura eſt ipſa, ſalutem*
Mittit Amazonio Creſſa puella viro.

That Health, *Hippolytus*, from me receive,
Which to the Writer you alone muſt give.

I could eaſily have excuſed *Ovid* making uſe of ſo beautiful a Turn twice, if he had kept to it without any Variation. For in his *Metamorphoſes*, *Byblis* writes to her Brother almoſt in the ſame Terms:

[q] *Quam, niſi Tu dederis, non eſt habitura, ſalutem,*
Hanc tibi mittit amans.

Thy Lover, gentle *Caunus*, wiſhes thee
That Health, which thou, alone, canſt give to me.
Steph. Harvey, Eſq;

[p] Ovid. Ep. IV. 1. [q] Metam. IX. 529.

But

But here, for want of the Word *ipſa*, the Elegance is quite loſt, and the Emphaſis ſpoil'd. In the ſame Poet, *Helen*, under a Pretence of diſſuading *Paris* from perſevering in his Addreſſes to her, pays a Compliment to his Beauty, and ſhews the juſt Senſe ſhe has of her own; and, at the ſame Time, artfully inſinuates, that ſhe has no Averſion to his Love, but rather a ſecret Paſſion for him: And expreſſes all this with wonderful Addreſs, in one Verſe:

[r] *Diſce, meo exemplo, formoſis poſſe carere.*
From my Example learn,
To bear the Want of what has Pow'r to charm.

Nothing can be more ingenious. This ſingle Line ſo teems with Thought, that it would bear, nay require a long Examination, to diſcover all its Beauties. At every Word ſome new Idea ariſes, which I ſhall, at preſent, leave to the Reflection of others, that I may not anticipate ſo great a Pleaſure. Under this Head of *delicate Thought*, we may reckon that celebrated Compliment with which *Horace* begins his Epiſtle to *Auguſtus*:

[s] *Cum tot ſuſtineas, & tanta negotia ſolus,*
Res Italas armis tuteris, moribus ornes,
Legibus emendes; in publica commoda peccem,
Si longo ſermone morer tua tempora, Cæſar.
When you alone ſuſtain the weighty Cares
Of all the World, and manage Peace and Wars;
The *Roman* State by Virtue's Rules amend,
Adorn with Manners, and with Arms defend;
To write a long Diſcourſe, and waſte your Time,
Againſt the publick Good, wou'd be a Crime.
Creech.

The Addreſs is as genteel as it is ingenious, and it is

[r] Ep. XIX. 9. [s] Lib. II. Epiſt. 1.

hard

hard to ſay whether we ſhould admire in it more the Poet, or the Courtier.

Strong Thoughts are ſuch as ſtrike us neither with *Acuteneſs*, their *Suddenneſs*, nor their *Delicacy*; but are full of Senſe and Solidity, carry Weight in their Meaning, and ſink deep in the Underſtanding. As in that of *Virgil*:

[t] *Diſce, Puer, virtutem ex me, verumque laborem,*
Fortunam ex aliis.
True Toil and Virtue learn, dear Youth, from me;
Fortune from others.

For it is a great Miſtake to think, that Gravity and Severity in Writing is inconſiſtent with Wit and Ingenuity. There's Elegance in moral and philoſophical Reflections; and nothing can have more of it than thoſe Sentences that are ſcatter'd up and down in the Narrations, but eſpecially the Speeches, in *Virgil*. In the eleventh *Æneis*, the confederate *Latin* Princes deliberate in Council what Steps to take after their late Defeat; *Turnus*, in a Speech upon that Occaſion, obſerves, that ſince they had Forces enough left to continue the War, they were not reduced to the ſad Neceſſity of ſuing for Peace. The moral Reflection he introduces, will be clearer ſeen, by conſidering the Verſes before and after it.

[u] *Sin & Trojanis cum multo gloria venit*
Sanguine, ſunt illis ſua funera, parque per omnes
Tempeſtas; cur indecores in limine primo
Deſicimus? cur ante tubam timor occupat artus?
Multa dies, variuſque labor mutabilis ævi,
Rettulit in melius; multos alterna reviſens
Luſit, & in ſolido rurſus fortuna locavit.
Non erit auxilio nobis Ætolus, & Arpi?
At Meſſapus erit, &c.

[t] Æn. XII. 435. [u] Lib. XI. ℣ 419.

If

If Glory to our Foes
Came purchas'd at a vaſt Expence of Blood:
If they too have their Fun'rals; and thro' all
The Tempeſt rag'd with equal Fury; why
Faint we inglorious, in the firſt Attempt,
And ſhrink with Fear before the Trumpet's Sound?
Oft has Viciſſitude of changeful Time
By various Turns to better State reſtor'd
Diſtreſs'd Affairs: Many with pleaſing Sport
Fortune, alternately reviſiting,
Has mock'd, and on a ſolid Baſe repos'd.
Will not *Ætolian Arpi* give us Aid?
Yet will *Meſſapus*, &c.

Theſe *echoing Turns*, much affected by the Moderns, tho' little us'd by the Ancients, have ſometimes their Beauty, ſometimes not: I can by no means agree with a certain Writer of ours, who tells us, that there's only one Example of this Kind in *Virgil*, and inſtances in that of *Orpheus* looking back upon *Eurydice*:

[w] *Cum ſubito incautum dementia cepit amantem,*
Ignoſcenda quidem, ſcirent ſi ignoſcere Manes!
When ſuddenly a Frenzy ſeiz'd
Th' unwary Lover; yet a venial Crime
Cou'd aught be venial, when the *Manes* judge.

He might with more Juſtice have produced that famous Sentence in the ſecond *Æneis*:

[x] *Una ſalus victis, nullam ſperare ſalutem.*
To vanquiſh'd Men
The only Safety is to hope for none.

Or thoſe melodious Verſes in the eighth Eclogue:

[y] *Sævus amor docuit natorum ſanguine matrem*
Commaculare manus: crudelis tu quoque mater;

[w] Geor. IV. 488. [x] Æ. 354. [y] Ecl. 47.

Crudelis

Crudelis mater magis, an puer improbus ille?
Improbus ille puer, crudelis tu quoque mater.

Inhuman Love th' unnat'ral Mother taught
To dip her Hands in her own Children's Blood;
Cruel indeed the Mother; was she then
More cruel? or more impious that dire Boy?

You see what a beautiful Effect this Repetition of the Words and Thoughts has; and how much Melancholy it adds to the Complaint. It is obvious from hence to observe, that *Virgil* could have far excell'd *Ovid* in these lighter Conceits, if he had not chose to let his Genius soar to much higher Flights. Under this Head we may add the following Passage from *Ovid*:

[z] *Si, nisi quæ facie poterit te digna videri,*
Nulla futura tua est; nulla futura tua est.

If to no Charms thou wilt thy Heart resign,
But such as merit, such as equal thine;
By none, alas! by none thou canst be mov'd,
Phaon alone by *Phaon* must be lov'd. *Pope.*

The Elegance of these Lines consists in giving a new Sense to the same Words; they reverberate, as it were, the Motions of the Mind, and by that Means affect it with Surprize and Admiration. But there are many who love to be sporting thus with Words, that are even without Meaning, and have no Thought in them to be reflected. They are a sort of *nominal* Turns, that our Youth are wonderfully studious of, especially in their Prose Writings, and which conduce not a little to the Corruption of their Taste.

There are Thoughts, likewise, of near Affinity with these, that consist in *Contraries*, and are some-

[z] Ovid. Ep. XV. 39.

times

times beautiful, often ridiculous. Of the beautiful Kind, is that of *Martial* to *Cæsar*:

[a] *Vox diversa sonat, populorum est vox tamen una;*
Cum verus patriæ diceris esse Pater.

While you their Country's Guardian they proclaim,
Their Tongues are diff'rent, but their Voice the same.

Ovid with less Success:

[b] *Non ego poscenti quod sum cito tradita Regi,*
Culpa tua est; quamvis hoc quoque culpa tua est.

In the former Instance, there's only a *seeming Contrariety*, which is built upon solid Truth; the latter approaches too near a Contradiction, I fear, indeed, it is one. To many of these elegant Fancies (among the Admirers of which Crowds of our modern Writers are desirous of being number'd) that Sneer of *Martial* may with much Justice be applied:

[c] *Pauper videri Cinna vult, & est pauper.*

Cinna's as really poor as he wou'd seem.

They are seeming *Contradictions*, and (strange as this new Species of Wit is) are in Reality what they seem: Or, if they deserve any better Name, they are an empty Sound of Words, *meer Noise, and Nonsense.*

Tho' the greatest Part of modern Wit turns entirely on this playing upon Words, I don't mean in Conversation only, (where these Trifles are hardly, very hardly tolerable) but even in the severest Writings, yet every Man of common Sense is so convinced of the Absurdity of prostituting it to the Abuse of Words, that I shall dwell no longer upon so disagreeable, so contemptible a Subject. I would only observe, that the Ancients are but little guilty

[a] Lib. de Spect. Epig. 3. [b] Ep. III. 7.
[c] Lib. VIII. Epig. 19.

of this Fault: That of *Terence*[d], *Inceptio eſt amentium, haud amantium;* and of *Cicero*, cited by *Juvenal*,

[e] *O fortunatam, natam, me conſule, Romam.*
Fortune fortun'd the happy Day of *Rome*,
When thou a Conſul ſole conſol'd her Doom.
Dryden.

and ſome others, tho' they conſiſt of a Gingle, which I could wiſh ſuch excellent Writers had wholly abſtain'd from, yet they are not *equivocal* Expreſſions, nor do they contain a double Senſe. *Ovid's*

[f] *Injuſtaque juſta peregit,*
And ſolemniz'd the Death himſelf had wrought.
Addiſon.

I know not how to find an Excuſe for. And it muſt be own'd, that *Plautus* often runs into theſe Puerilities; for which Reaſon, it is probable, he falls under the Cenſure of *Horace:*

[g] *At proavi noſtri Plautinos & numeros & Laudavere ſales; nimium patienter utrumque, (Ne dicam ſtulte) mirati.*
'Tis true, as I have heard, the former Times
Clapt *Plautus'* *Jokes*, and his uneven Rhimes.
Creech.

And it can't be denied but *Terence*, and ſome of the beſt Writers, have ſome little Touches of this Epidemical Diſtemper. There are few of theſe Conceits but are *merely equivocal*, that is, vary as little in the Thought, as in the Expreſſion; a ſort of Colliſion, from whence, 'tis poſſible, ſome Sparks of Wit may ſometimes, but very rarely, be ſtruck out. Thus much I thought proper to lay before you, in Relation

[d] Andr. I. 3. [e] Sat. X. 122. [f] Metam. L. II. ℣ 627. [g] De Art. Poet. ℣ 270.

to

to the *Elegance* of *Thought* in Poetry, both true and falſe.

I have little Occaſion to enlarge diſtinctly upon the *Sublime*, becauſe many Things relating to it fell in with what I have before advanced. However, as this was one of the Topics I propos'd to treat of, it is neceſſary I ſhould ſay ſomewhat to it, before I conclude this Diſſertation. I cannot better explain to you the Nature of the *Sublime*, and the Manner of its affecting us, than by giving you the Senſe of *Longinus* [h] upon it, not in a literal Verſion, but by repreſenting the Subſtance of him in a few Words. Whence is it that Writers of this Claſs, in a divine Impetuoſity ſeem regardleſs of Accuracy, and ſcorn to be confin'd within the vulgar Rules of Exactneſs? The Truth is, Nature has form'd Man of an inquiſitive Genius, and plac'd him in the World to behold and admire the Wonders of it; not as an idle Spectator, but as one concern'd in its buſieſt Scenes, eager for Action, and panting after Glory. To this End, he is ſtrongly actuated by a Love and Deſire of every Thing that is great and divine. The vaſt Expanſe of the Univerſe cannot bound his Imagination; he extends his Thoughts into other Worlds, and is loſt only in Infinity.

[i] *—— Vivida vis animi pervincit, & extra*
Procedit longe flammantia mœnia mundi.
His vigorous and active Mind is hurl'd
Beyond the ſeeming Limits of the World. *Creech.*

And, in Truth, if we contemplate a Hero, whoſe Life is one continu'd Series of great Actions, we then may make ſome Eſtimate of what we were born to. Hence, then, it is, that Fountains and Rivulets, which anſwer all the common Conveniencies of Life, never in a great Degree awaken our Attention.

[h] Περὶ ὕψους, § 35. [i] Lucret. Lib. I. ℣ 73.

But when we view the *Rhine*, the *Nile*, the *Danube*, but, above all, the Ocean, we ſtand fix'd at once with Awe and Wonder. So again, without any Emotion, we behold the daily Fires, of our own making, how long ſoever they continue burning: But we gaze with Aſtoniſhment at any ſudden Light in the Heavens, tho' it vaniſhes, perhaps, as ſoon as it appears. Nor is there any Thing more wonderful in Nature than the Eruptions of Mount *Ætna*, which ſometimes diſcharges from its Caverns Stones, and Deluges of Fire:

[k] —— *Horrificis juxta tonat Ætna ruinis:*
Interdumque atram prorumpit ad æthera nubem,
Turbine fumantem piceo, & candente favilla,
Attollitque globos flammarum, & ſidera lambit.
Interdum ſcopulos, avulſaque viſcera montis,
Erigit eructans, liquefactaque ſaxa ſub auras
Cum gemitu glomerat, fundoque exæſtuat imo.

But *Ætna* thunders nigh
In dreadful Ruins. With a Whirlwind's Force
Sometimes it throws to Heav'n a pitchy Cloud,
Redden'd with Cinders, and involv'd in Smoke;
And toſſes Balls of Flame, and licks the Stars.
Sometimes with loud Exploſion high it hurls
Vaſt Rocks, and Entrails from the Mountain torn,
With roaring Noiſe flings molten Stones in Air,
And boils, and bellows, from its loweſt Caves.

Upon the whole, we may draw this Concluſion, that Things of common Uſe or Neceſſity, loſe all their Wonder, by their Frequency; but whatever is unuſual, and beyond the Courſe of Nature, ſtrikes our Attention, and calls forth our Admiration.

I before obſerv'd, and therefore need not inſiſt upon it farther here, that the oppoſite to *Sublime* is *Bombaſt* and *Fuſtian*. I obſerv'd likewiſe, that the

[k] Æn. III. 571.

Sublime

Sublime was not incompatible with the *plain* Style, tho' chiefly adapted to the *Heroic*, and produc'd Examples of both; for what I ſaid in Relation to Style, I told you, in the Beginning of this Diſſertation, was *ſometimes* applicable to Thought. I would now add, that 'tis a great Miſtake to think that the *Sublime* is only, or chiefly ſuited to Joy, Triumphs, and pompous Deſcriptions; for nothing has more of that Quality than thoſe Ideas that command *Pity* and *Terror*. I ſhall produce one, but a very remarkable Inſtance of each, taken almoſt from the ſame Place. *Turnus*, when his Forces were defeated, and his own Death approaching, diſſuades his Siſter *Juturna* from any farther fruitleſs Offices of her Love, in this Heroical Complaint:

[1] *—— Sed quis olympo*
Demiſſam tantos voluit te ferre labores?
An fratris miſeri letum ut crudele videres?
Nam quid ago? aut quæ nunc ſpondet fortuna ſalutem?
Vidi oculos ante ipſe meos me voce vocantem
Murranum, quo non ſuperat mihi charior alter,
Oppetere ingentem, atque ingenti vulnere victum.
Occidit infelix, ne noſtrum dedecus Ufens
Aſpiceret: Teucri potiuntur corpore, & armis.
Exſcindine domos (id rebus defuit unum)
Perpetiar? dextra nec Drancis dicta refellam?
Terga dabo? & Turnum fugientem hæc terra videbit?
Uſque adeone mori miſerum eſt? Vos ô mihi, Manes,
Eſte boni; quoniam Superis averſa voluntas.
Sancta ad vos anima, atque iſtius inſcia culpæ
Deſcendam, magnorum haud unquam indignus avorum.

[1] Æn. XII. 634.

But who ſent you down
Diſpatch'd from Heav'n, and will'd you to endure
Such Labours? Was it that you might behold
Your moſt unhappy Brother's cruel Death?
For now what Meaſures can I take? What Hope
Of new Succeſs can any Fortune ſhew?
Before theſe Eyes myſelf *Murranus* ſaw
(Than whom to me no dearer Name ſurvives)
Calling on me for Help, I ſaw him fall
Mighty, and with a mighty Wound ſubdu'd.
There *Ufens* fell, unfortunate, nor liv'd
To ſee our Shame: The *Trojan* Victors keep
The full Poſſeſſion of his Corps and Arms.
Shall I endure (that only now remains)
The City to be raz'd? Nor with my Sword
Refel the Taunts of *Drances?* Shall I ſhew
My Back? And ſhall this Earth ſee *Turnus* fly?
Is Death ſo terrible? Ye Gods of Hell,
Be kind; ſince thoſe of Heav'n abhor my Pray'r:
To you a guiltleſs Ghoſt I will deſcend,
Unſully'd with this Stain, nor ever prov'd
Unworthy of my great Forefather's Fame.

It is impoſſible not to be wrapt into an Extaſy, as it were, of Pity and Wonder, to behold ſo majeſtic Sorrow, and ſuch exalted Miſery. Nor leſs ſublime is that Terror, with which the Fury poſſeſſes the Breaſt of the ſame unhappy Hero, when ſhe is ſent by *Jupiter* to carry the fatal Omen:

[m] *Poſtquam acies videt Iliacas, atque agmina Turni,*
Alitis in parvæ ſubito collecta figuram,
Quæ quondam in buſtis, aut culminibus deſertis,
Nocte ſedens, ſerum canit importuna per umbras;
Hanc verſa in faciem Turni ſe Peſtis ad ora
Fertque, refertque ſonans, clypeumque everberat alis.

[m] *Æ.* 861.

Soon

Soon as the *Trojan* Troops, and *Turnus'* Bands
She ſees; ſhe changes, leſſen'd, to the Shape
Of a ſmall Bird, which ſitting on the Tops
Of Tombs, and old deſerted Tow'rs, by Night,
Shrieks thro' the Shades, ill-omen'd: Thus tranſform'd
The Fiend o'er *Turnus'* Viſage, ſcreaming, flies
This Way, and that; and flaps upon his Shield
With flutt'ring Pinions.

I appeal to every Reader, whether at theſe Lines his Blood does not run cold within him, whether he does not feel the ſame diſmal Effects that *Turnus* did:

[a] *Illi membra novus ſolvit formidine torpor;*
Arrectæque horrore comæ, & vox faucibus hæſit.
Him unuſual Fear
Stiff'ning benumbs; uproſe his Hair erect,
And to his Mouth his Speech with Horror cleav'd.

When I firſt engag'd in this new Province, I thought to have treated largely, and in a ſet Diſſertation, on *poetic Licence*. But I now think that Deſign ſuperfluous, having ſpoke ſo largely of it, when I treated of the *Diction* and *Thought* of Poetry, and of the *Elegance* and *Sublimity* of each. I then obſerv'd, that tho' Poets have a Method of Writing peculiar to themſelves, and are allow'd many Liberties in it, from which other Writers are debarr'd; yet that they are indulg'd in nothing but what is built upon the Foundation of Truth, and ſolid Reaſon: Agreeably to that of *Horace*,

[b] —— *Pictoribus, atque Poetis,*
Quidlibet audendi ſemper fuit æqua poteſtas.
Scimus, & hanc veniam petimuſque damuſque viciſſim:

[a] ℣ 867. [b] De Art. Poet. ℣ 9.

Sed non ut placidis coeant immitia, non ut
Serpentes avibus geminentur, tigribus agni.

Painters and Poets have been ſtill allow'd
Their Pencils and their Fancies unconfin'd.
This Privilege we freely give and take:
But Nature, and the common Laws of Senſe,
Forbid to reconcile Antipathies,
Or make a Snake engender with a Dove,
And hungry Tygers court the tender Lambs.
Roſcom.

Nothing now remains, but to entreat you Gentlemen, that make up my Audience, candidly to accept theſe mean Attempts of mine upon ſo *difficult* a Subject.

LECTURE

LECTURE XII.

Of Epigram, and other lighter Species of Poetry.

DEſigning to treat of the ſeveral Species of Poetry, I thought proper to begin with the loweſt, and ſo gradually proceed to others of a higher Kind, till at laſt I come to the Epic or Heroic Poem.

Epigram ſhall be the chief Subject of this Diſcourſe. But as there are other ſmall Poems, which will ſcarce deſerve a diſtinct one, I ſhall here make ſuch Obſervations upon them as may be neceſſary.

The Account we have of Epigram, both of the Name and Thing, is this: It was uſual, it ſeems, among the Ancients, to cut ſhort Inſcriptions under the Statues of their Gods, which they call'd ἐπιγραφαὶ, and ἐπιγράμματα. Theſe Inſcriptions ſerv'd as *Lemmata*, or Subjects for little poetical Conceits, which were afterwards themſelves term'd Epigrams. That upon the Statue of *Venus*, made by *Praxiteles*, is well known.

Γυμνὴν οἶδε Πάρις με, καὶ Ἀγχίσης, καὶ Ἄδωνις.
Τὰς τρεῖς οἶδα μόνας, Πραξιτέλης δὲ πόθεν;

And what, ſaid ſhe, does this bold Painter mean?
When was I bathing thus, and naked ſeen? *Prior.*

In Courſe of Time, other Poems of like Nature, whatever their Subject was, went by the Name of Epigrams, on account of their Affinity with thoſe to which that Title was firſt appropriated.

Epigrams are divided into various Heads; the greater, the leſs, the equal *, the ſimple, the compound, the digreſſive, *&c.* But ſo minute a Diſtinction is needleſs, ſince they may be made upon any Subject. Some are ſatirical, as that of *Martial*,

[r] *Quem recitas meus eſt, O Fidentine, Libellus;*
Sed male cum recitas, incipit eſſe tuus.

'Tis true, in Print I own my humble Muſe;
But when the Laureat ſhall my Lines traduce,
Tartuffe in *England* juſtly I diſown;
The Food was mine, the Excrement's his own.

and in another Place:

[q] *Quid Te, Tucca, juvat vetulo miſcere Falerno*
In Vaticanis condita muſta cadis?
Quid tantum fecere boni tibi peſſima vina?
Aut quid fecerunt optima vina mali?
De nobis facile eſt; ſcelus eſt jugulare Falernum,
Et dare Campano toxica ſæva mero.
Convivæ meruere tui fortaſſe perire;
Amphora non meruit tam pretioſa mori.

What mean'ſt thou, *Tucca*, with Tocay to join
The vapid Refuſe of dull Rheniſh Wine?
Do you the cordial Juice ſuch Treach'ry owe,
Prepoſt'rous Charity the Cut-throat ſhow?
To ſpoil Tocay, however fare your Gueſt,
Is Murder, without Benefit of Prieſt.
Poiſon allow the Merit of your Friend;
But the poor Cask deſerv'd a better End.

This, I ſhould think, is the beſt kind of Epigram; for if the Nature of it in general conſiſts in being acute, whatever is ſatirical, muſt always be ſo. Not

* *Voſſius*'s Diviſion is here hinted at, but, I think, not clearly expreſs'd: Epigrams, ſays he, are twofold, 1. When a Perſon, Fact, or Thing, is ſimply deſcrib'd. 2. When ſomewhat is inferr'd from what was laid down, whether from its being greater, leſs, equal, or contrary.

[r] Lib. I. Epig. 39. [q] Lib. I. Epig. 19. but

but that there are other proper Subjects of it. Some panegyrical, directly contrary to the former; many of which we have in *Martial* upon the Emperor *Domitian*, and in others. That of *Virgil* is famous.

Nocte pluit tota, redeunt ſpectacula mane;
Diviſum imperium cum Jove Cæſar habet.
The Show'rs brought on the Night, the Shews the Day:
Thus *Jove* and *Cæſar* bear an equal Sway.

And the Inſcription by a Modern deſign'd for the Palace of the late King of *France:*

Non orbis gentem, non urbem gens habet ullam,
Urbſve domum, dominum nec domus ulla, parem.
The World no Realm, no Realm a City ſees,
No City Houſe, no Houſe a Lord like this.

In which, tho' there is not that witty Turn which is uſually reckon'd eſſential to Epigram; yet the Climax is ſo finely work'd up, that it well deſerves the great Praiſes that have been given it. There are other Epigrams of the Love Kind; as the following one in the Anthology of *Italian* Poets:

Me lætis Leonilla oculis, me Lydia torvis
Aſpicit; hæc noctem nuntiat, illa diem.
Has Cytherea meo ſtellas præfecit amori;
Hæc meus eſt Veſper, Lucifer illa meus.
One with a ſleepy, one a ſmirking Ray,
Fuſca the Night foretels, *Lucy* the Day.
Venus ordain'd, that each by Turns ſhou'd move,
The Morning, and the Ev'ning Star of Love.

Here, indeed, we have the true *Form* and *Shape* of an Epigram, it has all the *Appearance* of Wit and Elegance; but I fear it offends againſt right Reaſon and Nature. Some there are, upon various Circumſtances or Events, which are ſcarce reducible to any

Claſs. As this of *Martial*, upon the City *Ravenna*, where there is a great Scarcity of Water:

[r] *Callidus impoſuit nuper mihi caupo Ravennæ;*
Cum peterem mixtum, vendidit ille merum.

By a *Ravenna* Vintner once betray'd,
So much for Wine and Water mixt I paid.
But when I thought the purchas'd Liquor mine,
The Raſcal fob'd me off with only Wine. *Addiſon.*

And upon the Boy whoſe Throat was cut with an Icicle.

[s] *Quid non ſæva ſibi voluit Fortuna licere?*
Aut ubi mors non eſt, ſi jugulatis, aquæ?
What various Deaths are we decreed to feel,
If Waters poignard like the ſtubborn Steel?*

And this *Greek* Epigram:

Χρυσὸν ἀνὴρ εὑρὼν ἔλιπε βρόχον, αὐτὰρ ὁ χρυσὸν
Ὃν λίπεν οὐχ εὑρών, ἧψεν ὃν εὗρε βρόχον.

The Nooſe juſt tying, *Cotta* found a Purſe,
The Rope ſerv'd *Strephon*, who, by Fate's Reverſe,
Had loſt the Gold,—*to one a Bleſſing, one a Curſe.*

Here, again, the true Spirit of Epigram ſeems wanting; we have no Point of Wit, but only a plain Narration of Fact. But ſtill, the Words are ſo elegantly oppoſed to each other, and in ſo ſhort a Compaſs, that we ſhall ſcarce meet with any Thing which exceeds it. While I am ſpeaking of the different Subjects of Epigram, I would obſerve, that Religion is ſometimes one. And as nothing is ſo-

[r] Lib. III. Ep. 57. [s] Lib. IV. Ep. 18.

* Thus applied, more out of Humour, than an ill Opinion of a certain Perſon's Succeſs:

Fortune, we yield to thy capricious Will:
A Drop of *Ward*'s can cure, a Drop of Water kill!

ſuitable

ſuitable to Poetry as the *Marvellous*, nothing can afford more Matter for it than the *Chriſtian* Religion, which ſo much abounds with Miracles. I ſhall ſhew, perhaps, hereafter, how well adapted it is for Poems of the higheſt Kind, when I come to ſpeak of *ſacred Poetry*; but how proper a Subject it is for Epigram, is ſelf-evident. For tho' theſe ſort of Verſes are often ludicrous, and trifling; yet they ſometimes breathe a Spirit of Sublimity, every way becoming them. There are many of *Martial* of this Kind. That, for Inſtance, to the Emperor *Domitian*, upon his erecting to himſelf a triumphal Arch, and a Temple to Fortune:

[t] *Hic, ubi Fortunæ Reducis fulgentia late*
Templa nitent, felix area nuper erat.
Hic ſtetit, Arctoi formoſus pulvere belli,
Purpureum fundens Cæſar ab ore jubar.
Hic lauro redimita comas, & candida cultu,
Roma ſalutavit voce, manuque, ducem.
Grande loci meritum teſtantur & altera dona;
Stat ſacer, edomitis gentibus, arcus ovans.
Hic gemini currus numerant elephanta frequentem;
Sufficit immenſis aureus ipſe jugis.
Hæc eſt digna tuis, Germanice, porta triumphis;
Hos aditus urbem Martis habere decet.

Here late a happy Plain, where ſhines the Dome
Sacred to *Fortune ſafe conducting home.*
Here ſtopt great *Cæſar*, in his ruddy Car,
With Duſt reſplendent of the northern War;
While *Rome* with White bedeck'd, and Laurels crown'd,
With eager Voice and Hand her Genius own'd.
Here ſtands (for ſuch the Merit of the Place)
An Arch Triumphant o'er the *Dacian* Race.
Two Chariots, drawn by Elephants, proclaim
His double Conqueſt, and their double Shame.

[t] Lib. VIII. Epig. 65.

In

In Gold both Teams he reins with equal Hand,
Alone ſufficient for the wide Command.
Portals like this, great *Cæſar*, well become
The Miſtreſs of the World, and Lord of *Rome*.

And in another Place, upon *Pompey* and his Sons:

[u] *Pompeios juvenes Aſia atque Europa, ſed ipſum*
Terra tegit Libyes, ſi tamen ulla tegit:
Quid mirum, toto ſi ſpargitur orbe? jacere
Uno non potuit tanta ruina loco.

Aſia and *Europe Pompey*'s Sons contain,
Himſelf, if buried, lies in *Afric*'s Plain.
Nor wonder, if throughout the Globe are hurl'd
The mighty Ruins which once ſhook the World.

If it be ask'd in what the Nature of Epigram in general conſiſts; I reply, Acuteneſs and Facetiouſneſs are its chief Characteriſticks. It ought not to be mix'd, but uniform; to tend only to one Point, which is always to be expreſs'd with Strength and Poignancy in the laſt Verſe. This is above all to be regarded: If the laſt Verſe be flat and languid, or faulty in any Reſpect, it ſpoils the whole, how beautiful ſoever the ſeveral Parts are.

This, I ſay, is, in general, the Nature of Epigrams; to which, however, there are, perhaps, ſome few Exceptions, that are not ſo remarkable for their Acuteneſs and Facetiouſneſs, as for their Softneſs and Delicacy, or ſome other Elegance. I have given Inſtances of one or two already; whether they are to be look'd upon as Epigrams, or to be claſs'd under ſome other Species of Poetry, I am little ſollicitous. It is certain, there are ſome ſhort beautiful Poems which cannot come within this Denomination; ſeveral in *Martial*, particularly, and many which you, Gentlemen, compoſe for your Lent Ex-

[u] Lib. V. Epig. 75.

erciſes

erciſes upon philoſophical Subjects; which, as they have already gain'd you great Reputation, ſo would they farther extend it, if a judicious Collection of them were publiſh'd *. The greateſt Part of theſe are true Epigrams, witty and facetious. Some are Deſcriptions, Alluſions, or poetical Fictions, elegant and beautiful; by whatever Name they are call'd, matters not. No one, I think, could juſtly object to you, that you affected a barren Subject for Poetry, the better to ſhew the Strength of your Parts, and Livelineſs of your Invention; like a certain Monarch, who induſtriouſly choſe a Place for his ſtately Fountains, incapable of having Water brought to it but at a prodigious Expence, only that he might leave a Monument of the Greatneſs of his Power and Magnificence: For as different as Poetry and Philoſophy may ſeem to be, the one affords abundant Matter for the other, by furniſhing the Mind with a Variety of Ideas, and diverting it continually into new Channels.

Elogiums and *Inſcriptions* are to be reduced to this Head, and *Epitaphs* likewiſe; the Elegance of which chiefly conſiſts in an expreſſive Brevity. They ſhould not have ſo much as one Epithet, properly ſo called; nor two Words ſynonymous. Some of theſe are true Metre, others are ſomething between Proſe and Verſe, without any ſet Meaſure, but the Words perfectly poetical †.

Theſe little Compoſitions are often very beautiful: And I might add to them *Emblems*, or *Symbols*; by

* This has ſince been done in a Book intituled, *Carmina Quadrageſimalia*, printed at *Oxford* 1723, 8*vo.* reprinted at *London* 1741, 12*mo.*

† Too *poetical* often in another Senſe, when they give Characters abſolutely falſe; from whence the *French* have a witty Saying, *Il ment comme une Epitaphe*, He lies like an Epitaph.

which

which I mean certain Figures, painted or cut, metaphorically expreſſing ſome Action, with an imperfect Sentence at Bottom, which in ſome meaſure explains the Senſe of the Device, but leaves the Reader to ſupply the reſt. The Painting is call'd the Body of the Emblem, the Sentence at Bottom, the Soul of it. Theſe are Compoſitions purely poetical, and are often full of Thought and Elegance, I may add, of poetical Action too. A certain *French* Writer [w] (and among the *French* this Invention is in moſt Eſteem) has writ a long and accurate Diſſertation upon Emblems; wherein he has preciſely defin'd their Nature, explain'd their different Species, laid down Rules for their Compoſition, and for diſtinguiſhing the true from the falſe; and, laſtly, has produc'd Variety of Examples of them. I ſhall lay before you one Inſtance from him, that you may the better judge both of their Nature and Elegance. To expreſs the Secreſy of the King of *France*'s Counſels, as well as the terrible Effects of them to his Enemies, the Sun was repreſented behind a Cloud, with this half Verſe at Bottom:

——— *Tegiturque, parat dum fulmina.*———

Conceal'd while he prepares his Bolts.

This is an Invention which I take to be modern, entirely unknown to the Antients. And tho' the *French* Author I juſt mention'd may (according to the Genius of his Nation) attribute, perhaps, more to it than it deſerves; yet it certainly deſerves its Praiſe, for Elegance and Ingenuity.

But to return to Epigrams: Whatever you write, *be ſhort*. Thoſe, perhaps, are the beſt, which don't exceed eight Lines; for the reſt, they

[w] P. Bouhours, Entretiens d'Ariſte & Eugene, Dial. ult.

cannot

cannot be too ſhort. This Rule, however, I don't propoſe as a general one. Some Epigrams may be beautiful, tho' longer; one of which I have already cited in this Diſcourſe.

As to the Verſe; in *Latin* (for of that Language I here principally ſpeak) Hexameter and Pentameter are the moſt proper, tho' others are not to be excluded; for Iambics and Hendecaſyllables are frequently made uſe of.

Many of the Hendecaſyllable Poems are rather Odes than Epigrams: Some ſeem to be of a mix'd Nature; and Poetry has nothing more beautiful than both. *Catullus* is reckon'd the Prince in this Kind of Writing, whom others, both Ancients and Moderns, have very happily imitated, and ſome, perhaps, excell'd. The Nature of them conſiſts in being lax and free, in chuſing light Subjects, eſpecially thoſe of Love; and ſometimes ſerious ones, as Epitaphs, and the like. It is always ſoft and ſweet, full of tender Diminutives, and of Repetitions of the ſame Verſe at proper Diſtances.

Whether the Ancients or Moderns have deſerv'd beſt of theſe light Kinds of Poetry, but eſpecially of Epigram, is hard to ſay. It is certain, the latter have a Turn of Wit which the former were Strangers to; but ſtill I dare not decide the Preference. But leaving that Diſpute, we ſhall all agree in this common Maxim, *Ineſt ſua gratia parvis*; Little Things have their Beauty; and ſometimes not a little Beauty. Tho' they are ſmall in Bulk, yet they are great in Value; and not only Wit and Ingenuity are requir'd in the Compoſition of them, but true Reaſon, and ſolid Judgment.

* *In tenui labor, at tenuis non gloria.*——

* Geor. IV. 6.

Slight

Slight is the Subject, but not ſo the Praiſe.
Pope.

Sometimes the Pains requir'd in this Kind of Compoſition is very great; but then they are always repaid by it. To which we may often apply what *Virgil* ſays of the Bees:

Ingentes animos anguſto in pectore verſant.
Their little Bodies mighty Souls inform.

LECTURE

LECTURE XIII.

Of Elegy.

THIS is a Subject, which, if I am not miſtaken, very few have largely treated of. *Scaliger*, indeed, and ſome others, have juſt mention'd it, and made ſome ſhort Strictures upon it: But no one, that I know of, except *Voſſius*, of the better Sort of Writers, have writ a profeſſed Diſſertation of this Species of Poetry, tho' it is the ſweeteſt, the moſt engaging, and every way worthy our Conſideration. Who the Inventor was, *Horace* profeſſes himſelf ignorant:

[z] *Quis tamen exiguos elegos emiſerit Auctor,*
Grammatici certant; & adhuc ſub judice lis eſt.
But to whoſe Muſe we owe that Sort of Verſe,
Is undecided by the Men of Skill. *Roſcom.*

Nor is this an Enquiry of much Moment. Under the Title of Elegy, is generally and primarily underſtood a mournful Poem, bewailing the Loſs of ſome Perſon lately dead; and ſometimes has any other melancholy plaintive Circumſtance for its Subject. *Scaliger* calls it a Poem proper for *Complaints:*

[a] —— *Neu* miſerabiles
Decantes elegos;

[z] Art. Poet. ℣ 77. [a] L. I. Od. 33.

ſays

ſays *Horace*, addreſſing himſelf to *Tibullus*, the beſt of Elegiac Writers. This appears clear enough, from the Etymology of the Word; either from ἴλιος, or (as others more juſtly) from ἐ, a Particle of Grief, and λέγειν, to *ſpeak*; not from εὖ λέγειν, as ſome have ill judg'd, becauſe, forſooth, we generally ſpeak in Praiſe of thoſe whoſe Deaths we lament. It is certain, this Sort of Poem was anciently, and from its firſt Origin, made uſe of at Funerals. That, therefore, of one famous Elegiac Poet upon the Death of another, of equal Fame, of *Ovid*, I mean, on *Tibullus*, deſerves, in the moſt proper Senſe, this Title: The Writer himſelf obſerves as much, in the following Lines:

[b] *Flebilis indignos Elegëia ſolve capillos;*
Ah! nimis ex vero nunc tibi nomen erit.
In wild Diſorder let thy Treſſes flow,
Thy Name now too much verify'd by Woe!

By which Words, however, he intimates, that ſome other Poems, beſides Funeral ones, went under the Name of Elegies. *Horace* is very expreſs:

[c] *Verſibus impariter junctis querimonia primum,*
Poſt etiam inclusa eſt voti ſententia compos.
In Verſes *long* and *ſhort* Grief firſt appear'd,
In thoſe they mourn'd paſt Ills, and future fear'd:
But ſoon theſe Lines with Mirth and Joy were fill'd,
And told when Fortune, or a Miſtreſs ſmil'd.
Creech.

From whence we learn, that Deaths are not the only Subjects of Elegy, but that by Degrees it was employ'd upon other Things that had nothing mournful in them, nay, that turn'd upon Gaiety and Feſtivity. *Ovid*'s Books of Love, the Poems of *Tibullus*

[b] Ov. Amor. L. III. El. 9. [c] De Art. Poet. 75.

and

and *Propertius*, are entitled *Elegies*; and yet ſo far are they from being ſad, that they are ſometimes ſcarce ſerious. *Ovid*, particularly, takes too great a Liberty in this Kind of Poem, and lets his Joy break out to Exceſs. But if we look back to the Original, both of the Name and Thing, we ſhall find that Writings of this Sort are ſtyled *Elegies* only in an improper Senſe of the Word. One and the ſame Title, therefore, was indiſcriminately given to Poems on different Subjects, but which agreed in their Verſe, and Manner of Writing.

The chief Subjects to which Elegy owes its Riſe, are Death and Love: The Connexion between which, it is not my Buſineſs here to examine. The Writings of the Poets, I have above mention'd, chiefly conſiſt of Love; tho' Elegies admit almoſt of any Matter, eſpecially if it be treated of ſeriouſly. The Contempt of Riches, the Pleaſures of the Country, are in great meaſure the Subject of them, in which a little Love is generally interſpers'd. Some, but few, in *Tibullus* and *Propertius*, have nothing of Death or Love; which, however, have been always the chief Subjects of this Kind of Poem. That Elegy, therefore, ought to be eſteem'd the moſt perfect in its Kind, which has ſomewhat of both at once: Such, for Inſtance, where the Poet bewails the Death of his *Corinna*, his *Delia*, or *Lycoris*, or of ſome Youth or Damſel falling a Martyr to Love. Among the Love Elegies, thoſe are to be placed next, which are full of that melancholy Complaint which Lovers ſeldom want Matter for. Yet there are ſome of a very different Temper; but which, as I obſerv'd before, are improperly rank'd in the Number of Elegies. Some, again, are full of Joy and Triumph: As in *Ovid*,

[d] *Ite triumphales circum mea tempora lauri.*

Triumphant Laurels, round my Temples twine.

Others ſatirical: As that of the ſame Poet, where, deſcribing an old Woman, he breaks out into theſe Imprecations againſt her:

[e] *Dii tibi dent nudoſque lares, inopemque ſenectam,*
Et longas hyemes, perpetuamque ſitim.

May'ſt thou with Poverty and Age be curſt,
The Length of Winter, and the Summer's Thirſt.

Others are jocoſe in different Ways, Inſtances of all which we meet with in *Ovid.*

Many Elegies are writ in the Epiſtolary Manner, as is obvious, to every one that has but the leaſt Knowledge of the Poets I have now cited. Under this Head, therefore, *Ovid's Heroine* Epiſtles (as they are uſually call'd, from their being writ by Ladies of Proweſs and Renown) come very properly to be mention'd, ſince they partake of the Nature of Elegy, not only on account of their Verſe, but Sentiment. They are deſervedly eſteem'd the beſt Part of that Poet's Works; as his Book *De Triſtibus*, tho' the trueſt Elegies, are the worſt. Nothing can have a more delicate Turn than ſome of theſe Epiſtles. I have given Inſtances of this elſewhere; and have no need of repeating them here, or producing new ones. His *Heroine* Epiſtles differ from his Elegiac in this, that the former are fictitious, and perſonate the Character of ſome one or other mention'd in fabulous Hiſtory; the latter are addreſs'd, in the Poet's own Name, to his Friends of either Sex. Setting aſide this Circumſtance, and that of their Length, there is very little Difference between them. To return, therefore, to Elegy, according to the common Acceptation of the Word; its chief

[d] Amor. Lib. II. Eleg. 12. [e] Lib. I. Eleg. 9.

Property

Property is to be eaſy and ſoft; to flow in one even Current, and captivate the Ear with Melody. It muſt be free from all Aſperity, from every Thing that is harſh, or unpleaſant. For, as *Propertius* ſweetly expreſſes it:

[f] *Carmina manſuetus lenia quærit Amor.*

Soft flow the Lines that gentle Love indites.

And nothing is often more harmonious than Complaints; the Muſic of Birds is ſaid by the Poets to be expreſſive of them, as in *Ovid:*

[g] *Et latere ex omni dulce queruntur aves.*

And all around
The Birds return a ſweetly plaintive Sound.

How vocal are Tears, how moving poetic Grief! Hear *Tibullus* thus bewailing his Sickneſs in a foreign Land:

[h] *Ibitis Ægæas ſine me, Meſſala, per undas,*
O! utinam memor es ipſe, cohorſque, mei!
Me tenet ignotis ægrum Phæacia terris;
Abſtineas avidas, mors modo nigra, manus.
Abſtineas, mors atra, precor; non hic mihi mater,
Quæ legat in mœſtos oſſa peruſta ſinus:
Non ſoror, Aſſyrios cineri quæ dedat odores,
Et fleat effuſis ante ſepulchra comis.

While you, *Meſſala*, tempt th' *Ægæan* Sea,
I am prevented to attend your Way.
But Oh! I wiſh you ſtill may condeſcend
To bear a kind Remembrance of your Friend.
Oppreſs'd with Sickneſs, wearied out with Pains,
Phæacia me in unknown Lands detains,
Sick, and a Stranger, in a foreign Land.
Black Death, withdraw thy dire capacious Hand;
Black Death, keep off, I pray, no Mother here
Can gather up this Duſt with pious Care:

[f] L. I. El. 9. [g] Amor. L. III. El. 1. [h] L. I. El. 3.

No

No Sister here with decent Grief can come
To please my Shade, and, off'ring rich Perfume,
With flowing Hair lament before my Tomb.
Dart.

Hear *Ovid* thus lamenting the Death of the same Poet, which follow'd from that Sickness. He speaks to Elegy:

[i] *Ille tui Vates operis, tua fama, Tibullus,*
Ardet in extructo corpus inane rogo.
Ecce Puer Veneris fert everſamque pharetram,
Et fractos arcus, & ſine luce facem.
Aſpice, demiſſis ut eat miſerabilis alis,
Pectoraque infeſta tundat aperta manu.

Thy Poet, and Promulger of thy Fame,
Tibullus burns upon the Fun'ral Flame.
With Torch extinct, and Quiver downward born,
See *Cupid*, once sincere! attend his Urn.
Now beats his Breast, his tender Hands now wrings,
Broken his Shafts, and pendulous his Wings.

While the one dies thus, while the other so laments his Death, how justly are they both render'd immortal? They that thus write, and thus deserve Elegies, are such as least need them. Some *Descriptions* in Elegy are not less affecting; as of the Elysian Fields, in the same Passage of *Tibullus:*

[k] *Hic choreæ, cantuſque vigent; paſſimque vagantes*
Dulce ſonant tenui gutture carmen aves.
Fert caſiam non culta ſeges, totoſque per agros
Floret odoratis terra benigna roſis.
Ac juvenum ſeries, teneris immiſta puellis,
Ludit, & aſſidue prælia miſcet Amor.

[i] Amor. L. III. El. 8. [k] L. I. El. 3.

There

There Songs perpetual charm the liſt'ning Ear,
Whilſt all the feather'd Wand'rers of the Air,
To join the Sound, their warbling Throats prepare.
Caſſia from ev'ry Hedge unbidden breathes,
And to the Gales its fragrant Sweets bequeaths;
The bounteous Earth its purple Product yields,
And od'rous Roſes paint the bluſhing Fields:
There Trains of blooming Youths, and tender Maids,
Sport on the Green, and wanton in the Shades;
While buſy Love attends them all the Way,
Joins in the Conflict, and provokes the Fray. *Dart.*

With this Kind of Poem, every Thing that is epigrammatical, ſatirical, or ſublime, is inconſiſtent. Elegy aims not to be witty or facetious, acrimonious or ſevere, majeſtic or ſublime; but is ſmooth, humble, and unaffected; nor yet is ſhe abject in her Humility, but becoming, elegant, and attractive.

Among our modern Poems, we have few entitled Elegies; thoſe only that are made on Funeral Occaſions: But we have many that may be call'd ſo, in the larger Senſe of the Word, as it was uſed by the Ancients, and we have above explain'd it: Many very ingenious ones on Love; and others of a melancholy and ſoft Turn.

Among the Ancients, Hexameters and Pentameters were ſo peculiar to Elegy, that this Kind of Metre is uſually ſtyled *Elegiac*; nor is any more ſoft, or more harmonious. Inſtead of it, we, in our own Tongue, uſe the Heroic.

The Writers in this Way that Antiquity has handed down to us, are all in *Latin*. Some there were more early among the *Greeks*, as *Callimachus*, *Philetas*, and others; the Fragments only of whoſe Writings have been ſav'd from the Wreck of Time.

They that would know which they are, may conſult the learned *Voſſius*, and others; it being beſide my Purpoſe to enquire into Facts and Hiſtory.

Among the *Latins*, *Ovid*, *Tibullus*, and *Propertius*, bear the firſt Rank; with whom *Catullus* is ſometimes join'd: But not ſo properly, his Merit being chiefly in his Hendecaſyllables, and ſome other wanton Verſes, and his elegant Poem on the Argonautic Expedition. There is nothing of his Elegiacal, except the Meaſure of ſome of his Verſes; and they ſo uneven, that they ſcarce deſerve the Name of Verſe; ſo rough, that they cannot be read without Offence to the Ear, nay, to the very Teeth. *Ovid* is generally reckon'd, and that deſervedly, the firſt in this Claſs, no one having equall'd his Numbers, nor exceeded his Diction. I ſubmit it only, for it is a Matter of Doubt, whether *Tibullus* is not leſs diffuſe, and more correct. There is one Fault in *Ovid*, which is unpardonable, his perpetual and nauſeous Repetition of *mei*, *tui*, and *ſui*, in the laſt Foot of his Pentameters. How much more beautiful would they have been, if this Fault had been avoided, which might have been done with little Care. And yet a ſixth Part, at leaſt, are ſo terminated, than which, nothing can be more lifeleſs and inſignificant. *Tibullus* and *Propertius* rarely fall into this Fault, but into another, eſpecially the latter of them, from which *Ovid* is free; I mean the concluding the Pentameter with Words of three or more Syllables; whereas Harmony requires a Word of no more than two. One Writer in this Way it would be unpardonable to paſs over, tho' we have little remaining of him, if he is the ſame (as it is probable he is not) with him to whom *Virgil* has given Immortality by mentioning him in his Works: For immortal, ſure, he muſt needs be, of whom the beſt of immortal Poets has given this Eulogy:

Pierides

[1] *Pierides, vos hæc facietis maxima Gallo,*
Gallo, cujus amor tantum mihi creſcit in horas, &c.
You ſhall for *Gallus* dignify this Verſe,
Gallus, for whom my Friendſhip grows each Hour.

This from *Virgil*'s Eclogues, which Species of Poetry will be the Subject of our next Diſcourſe.

[1] Eclog. X. 72.

LECTURE XIV.

Of Paſtorals.

THIS, alſo, is another Species of Poetry, not profeſſedly treated of by any of the Ancients, nay, not ſo much as mention'd amongſt their various Precepts relating to this Art. The later *Latin* Critics have beſtow'd ſome Pains upon it; but our modern ones, of the preſent Age, much more; and (to ſpeak my own Judgment, which I ſhall always be ready to ſubmit to better) ſeem to have attributed too much Honour to it, and to have rais'd more Duſt, than the Importance of the Subject deſerv'd. Not but that I think it a very elegant Kind of Writing, and every Way worthy of Imitation. As it is now incumbent on me to ſay ſomewhat of it, agreeably to my preſent Deſign, I ſhall put together what I think moſt material relating to it, without making any Difference between what I have advanced new, or others have obſerved before me.

In the firſt Ages of the World, before Men were united in Cities, and had learnt the ſtudied Arts of Luxury, they lead in the Country plain harmleſs Lives; and Cottages, rather than Houſes, might be ſaid to be their Habitation. Thoſe happy Times abounded with Leiſure and Recreation: To feed the Flock, and cultivate the Land, was the only Employ of its peaceable Inhabitants; the former the joint

joint Care of the Women and the Men. Hence aroſe abundant Matter for Love and Verſe. Nay, when the World was grown older, and Mankind ſo numerous, that they began to ſecure themſelves in Walls, and to introduce what we call a more civil Life, yet ſtill Shepherds and Husbandmen main-tain'd their primitive Honour. Country Affairs, but eſpecially the Care of the Flock, was not only the Labour of the Vulgar, but the Exerciſe of the Rich and Powerful, nay, of Princes of either Sex. This appears ſufficiently, from ſacred Hiſtory, in the Example of *Jacob*, *Rachel*, *Moſes*, and the other Patriarchs: From the Teſtimony of Heathen Writers; as in that of *Virgil*,

[m] *Nec te pœniteat pecoris, divine Poeta,*
Et formoſus oves ad flumina pavit Adonis.
Them, heav'nly Poet, bluſh not thou to own:
Ev'n fair *Adonis* did not ſcorn to tend
Along the River's Side his fleecy Care.

And in another Place, to omit other Inſtances:

[n] *Quem fugis, ah! demens? habitarunt Dii quoque ſilvas,*
Dardaniuſque Paris.
Whom fly'ſt thou, thoughtleſs? Gods have liv'd in Woods;
And *Trojan Paris*.

From what has been ſaid, it is eaſy to ſee the Origin of *Paſtorals*. It appears to have been a very ancient Species of Poetry, tho' I can by no means agree with *Scaliger* *, in thinking it the oldeſt, which is an Honour

[m] Eclog. X. 17. [n] Eclog. II. 60.

* Mr. *Fontenelle*, and Mr. *Pope*, in their Diſcourſes on Paſtoral Poetry, are of *Scaliger*'s Opinion. But I might obſerve, in Favour of Dr. *Trapp*'s, that the moſt ancient

Honour I ſhall hereafter ſhew to be due to the Lyric Kind Shepherds, 'tis true, were the firſt Poets; but Odes and Hymns, not Paſtorals, were their original Compoſitions. However, Paſtorals, as I ſaid, are undoubtedly of very great Antiquity; and the *Song of Solomon* in ſacred Writ comes under this Denomination; from whence, 'tis very obſervable, *Theocritus* has borrow'd literally many Expreſſions; making uſe of the Verſion of the Seventy-two, with whom he was cotemporary.

The Nature of this Kind of Poem is to be ſweet, eaſy, and flowing, and ſimple beyond all others: And yet not ſo humbly ſimple, (which is a common Miſtake) as if it repreſented only the Characters of poor ignorant Shepherds, and the Thoughts of modern Ruſtics. The Scene, indeed, of Bucolics (for that is another Name for Paſtorals, the former derived from the Herds, as the latter from the Flocks, that are the different Objects of the rural Care) ought always to be laid in the Country. Nor ought it to be diverſify'd with any Thing repugnant to ſuch a Situation; nay, Views, and little Deſcriptions of Lawns and Groves, ought always to be interſpers'd in theſe Poems, whatſoever the Subject of them be. Yet there may be a Mixture of Images of a different Kind, and much elevated above the Apprehenſion of the Vulgar. *Virgil*, therefore, is very undeſervedly cenſured by many for having introduced Philoſophy, and even ſomewhat of the Sublime, into his Eclogues: For ſince, as we obſerv'd, many of the ancient Shepherds were Perſons, I need not ſay of the better, but even of the firſt Rank, it is no great Wonder if ſome of them were Scholars, and Philo-

Greek Poets, whoſe Names are preſerv'd, are not ſuppoſed to have been Paſtoral Writers. The *Greeks* ſeem to have been perſuaded that their Hymns were the firſt Productions in Verſe: See *Spanheim*'s Notes on *Callim.* p. 2, 3, *&c.*

ſophers.

ſophers. 'Tis a Miſtake to ſay that *Virgil*'s fourth and ſixth Eclogues are not Paſtorals; and that nothing ſublime, but every Thing ſimple and ruſtic, is compatible with this Kind of Poetry. They are Paſtorals, undoubtedly; tho' of a different Kind from the common ones. There is a certain Sublimity, agreeable enough to Paſtorals; a Sublimity that ariſes from Philoſophy and Religion, not from the Tumults of War, the Pomps of a Court, or the Refinements of the City. I don't ſee, therefore, why that divine Eclogue, *Sicelides Muſæ*, &c. (divine I may call it, on many Accounts) ſhould not be allow'd a Place among the Paſtorals. The rural Muſes are invok'd; the Woods are celebrated; many Things expreſly relate to the Country, and nothing repugnant to it. The Subject, indeed, is great; the Words and Thoughts ſublime; ſublimer, I may ſay, than the Poet himſelf was aware of. For it is the Opinion of the moſt learned Divines, to which I very readily adhere, that he by happy Error celebrates from the Sibylline Oracles the Birth of *Chriſt*, which was then approaching; and it is evident, that many of the Lines deſcribe the Nature of the Meſſias, and of his Kingdom, in Terms of near Affinity with the ſacred Writings°. And nothing, ſurely, could be more proper, than that the Prince of Poets ſhould promulge that joyful News in Paſtorals, which was firſt proclaim'd from Heaven to Shepherds. That Objection drawn from the Invention of War and Ships, both which the Poet touches upon in the following Lines, is of little Moment.

> ᵖ *Alter erit tum Tiphys, & altera quæ vehat Argo*
> *Delectos heroas; erunt etiam altera bella,*
> *Atque iterum ad Trojam magnus mittetur Achilles.*

° See Bull. Primitiv. & Apoſtol. Tradit. p. 20, 21.
ᵖ Eclog. IV. 34.

Another *Tiphys* o'er the Main ſhall waft
The choſen Chiefs, another *Argo* guide;
New warlike Expeditions ſhall be form'd,
And great *Achilles* ſail again for *Troy*.

Theſe are only incidental Ornaments of the Poem, not properly the Subject of it. Now it is impoſſible that the Argonautic Expedition, ſo famous throughout the World, ſhould be unknown to Shepherds of Birth and Education. And as little probable is it, that they ſhould be ignorant of the *Trojan* War, occaſion'd by one of their own Profeſſion. It is repugnant, indeed, to Paſtorals, to turn wholly upon warlike Affairs; but it is a very different Thing to bring them in only as Embelliſhments. This is what may be juſtly pleaded for all the Eclogues of *Virgil*, where Arms are mention'd; excepting only the tenth:

[q] *Nunc inſanus amor duri me Martis in armis,*
Tela inter media, atque adverſos detinet hoſtes.
Now frantic Love amidſt thick Darts and Foes
Detains me in the rigid Toil of Arms.

Which, I confeſs, raiſes in me ſome Difficulty; becauſe the Speaker introduc'd is manifeſtly a Soldier. But it muſt be obſerv'd, that he does not at the ſame Time perſonate a Shepherd, as is manifeſt, from his Speech to the *Arcadians*, when he expreſſes his Envy of their happy Retirement:

[r] *Atque utinam è vobis unus, veſtrique fuiſſem*
Aut cuſtos gregis, aut maturæ vinitor uvæ.
O had kind Fortune made me one of you,
Keeper of Flocks, or Pruner of the Vine.

Had he been *one of them*, he would have join'd two contradictory Ideas; for a Shepherd in Arms, who

[q] *Ecl.* 10. *v.* 44. [r] *Ecl.* 1. *v.* 35.

could

could have born? But if it be ask'd, Why then is the chief Perſon in the Paſtoral drawn of a very different Character from Paſtoral; it is ſufficient to anſwer, That *Virgil* ſo thought fit; and there is nothing abſurd, or unnatural, in ſuch a Conduct. For the State of the Caſe is no more than this: *Gallus*, engag'd in Camps, happens to fall in Love, and retires to the Solitude of the Country, to give vent to his Paſſion. Shepherds, Nymphs, *Sylvanus*, *Pan*, and even *Apollo* himſelf, lend their kind Endeavours to aſſwage it. Thus far every Thing is natural, elegant, and truly paſtoral. And the whole Poem is of the ſame Nature, excepting only the two Verſes I have now cited. Leave out theſe, and even *Gallus*'s Complaint is perfectly rural, and all the Thoughts drawn from the Country. In ſhort, ſo far am I from aſſenting to thoſe Critics who would exterminate this from the Number of Paſtorals, that I would place it the very firſt of all. The ſixth Eclogue of *Virgil*, which I juſt now mention'd, is full of Philoſophy and Religion: And that's a ſort of Sublime, which, I before obſerv'd, was very conſiſtent with Paſtoral. The fourth I have likewiſe ſpoke to. The reſt of them are Paſtoral, without any Objection; tho' the Etymology of the Word *Eclogue* by no means implies it; which ſignifies no more than *Select Poems upon any Subject whatſoever*. The Word *Idyllium* is as little expreſſive of *Paſtorals*, nor are all *Theocritus*'s ſuch: It is deriv'd from εἶδος, Species; and the Word *Idyllia* imports no more than *Poems of various Sorts*.

It muſt be own'd, however, that the greateſt Eſſential in Paſtoral is *Simplicity*; and that theſe Lines have much leſs of the Nature of it,

[f] *Aſpice convexo nutantem pondere mundum,*
Terraſque, tractuſque maris, &c.

See the globous Weight
Of Earth, of Heav'n, of Ocean, nod and ſhake.

than the following:

[t] *Forte ſub arguta conſederat ilice Daphnis,*
Compulerantque greges Corydon & Thyrſis in unum,
Thyrſis oves, Corydon diſtentas lacte capellas.

By chance, beneath the Covert of an Oak,
That whiſper'd with the Breezes, *Daphnis* ſate;
And *Corydon* and *Thyrſis* to one Place
Together drew their Flocks; *Thyrſis*, his Sheep;
His milch Goats, *Corydon*.

But then it ought to be elegantly ſimple, for the Plowmen ſhould appear in their Holyday Garments. Thus we ſee Shepherds and Shepherdeſſes introduced upon the Stage; and tho' they bring Crooks in their Hands, and Straw Hats on their Heads, yet their Dreſs is neatly rural, and above the Habit of the Vulgar. In *Virgil* we have frequent Examples of this polite Ruſticity, in thoſe Places, eſpecially, where Love is concern'd. I ſhall only produce one, out of many, where *Damon*, deſperately in Love with the fair, but cruel *Niſa*, vents his Paſſion in theſe Words:

[v] *Sepibus in noſtris parvam te roſcida mala*
(Dux ego veſter eram) vidi cum matre legentem;
Alter ab undecimo tum me jam ceperat annus,
Jam fragiles poteram à terra contingere ramos:
Ut vidi! ut perii! ut me malus abſtulit error!

Thee, with thy Mother, in our Meads I ſaw,
Gath'ring freſh Apples; I myſelf your Guide;

[f] Virg. Eclog. IV. 50. [t] VII. 1.
[v] VIII. 37.

Then

Then thou wert little; I, juſt then advanc'd
To my twelfth Year, cou'd barely from the Ground
Touch with my reaching Hand the tender Boughs:
How did I look! how gaze my Soul away
How did I die! in fatal Error loſt!

How unartful the Complaint, but yet how lovely?

Tho' the Style of Paſtoral is humble, it is not ſordidly mean, nor ſlovenly careleſs, neither reſembling the Diction of Comedy, which is almoſt Proſe; nor of the bantering Satire, which is one Degree farther from it: But is ſweet, pleaſant, and eaſy; elegant with Plainneſs, and but poetically low:

[w] *O tantum libeat mecum tibi ſordida rura,*
Atque humiles habitare caſas, & figere cervos!
O! were but thy Delight with me to dwell,
In lowly Cottages, and rural Shades
By thee deſpis'd! *to drive the Kids a-field*
With a green Wand, and ſhoot the flying Deer!

Antique Phraſes, Ænigma's, Proverbs, ſuperſtitious Fables, are no unbecoming Ornaments of this Sort of Poetry.

It generally conſiſts of Dialogue, in which ſome little dramatical Action ought to be repreſented, a rural Scene deſcribed, Interlocutors under different Circumſtances, and a certain Plot carried on to a Concluſion. For 'tis not to be imagin'd, as many, now a-days do, that every Dialogue between two Shepherds, full of the bleating of Flocks, is a proper Paſtoral: No, 'tis a Thing that requires more Labour, Art, and Judgment, than we are generally aware of: Nor is any Kind of Poem leſs tolerable, if ill, or even moderately perform'd. Who can bear thoſe Crowds of Paſtorals, as they are inſcrib'd, that are daily publiſh'd in *Latin* and *Engliſh*, upon the

[w] Eclog. II. 28.

Death of Princes, or Friends? They are all caſt in the ſame Mould; read one, you read all. *Daphnis* asks *Thyrſis* the Reaſon of his Grief, whether he has loſt a Goat; or *Amaryllis*, or *Neæra*, has been unkind to him. The Anſwer is, his Sorrow is owing to no ſuch Cauſe; but that *Pan*, or *Phyllis*, or any one elſe is dead. Say you ſo, ſays *Daphnis*, I thought all along that *Pan* had been immortal, or *Phyllis*, I am ſure, deſerv'd to have been ſo. They then join in celebrating, alternately, the Praiſes of the deceas'd. Birds, Sheep, Woods, Mountains, Rivers, are full of Complaints. We are told how the croaking Raven foreboded the diſmal Event; Oaks were riv'd with Thunder; every Thing, in ſhort, is wondrous lamentable, and in the moſt emphatical Senſe miſerable.

The Subjects of Paſtoral are as various as the Paſſions of human Nature, nay, it may, in ſome meaſure, partake of every Kind of Poetry, but with this Proviſo, that the Scene of it ought always to be in the Country, and the Thoughts never contrary to thoſe that are bred there. Some of theſe ſhort Strictures of Wit between contending Shepherds, ſavour ſomething of Epigram: Thus in *Virgil*;

[z] *Fraxinus in ſilvis pulcherrima, pinus in hortis,*
Populus in fluviis, abies in montibus altis:
Sæpius at ſi me, Lycida formoſe, reviſas;
Fraxinus in ſilvis cedet tibi, pinus in hortis.

In Groves the Beech, in Gardens is the Pine
Moſt beautiful; the Poplar near the Streams;
On the high Mountain's Tops, the ſtately Fir.
Yet, lovely *Lycidas*, if oft thou come
To viſit me; thou, beauteous, ſhalt excel
The Pine in Gardens, and the Beech in Groves.

The ſecond Eclogue is *Elegiac*, containing a Love

[z] Eclog. VII. 65.

Complain

Complaint; ſo is the latter Part of the fifth, bewailing the Death of *Daphnis*. The Songs, and Pipe, ſeem reducible to ſome Kind of *Ode*. And I ſee no Reaſon, why the third Eclogue may not be deem'd a ſhort rural *Comedy*, repreſenting the Manners, the Follies, little Tricks, and Quarrels of low Country Life; intermix'd, likewiſe, with various Strokes of *Satire*, many Examples of which we have elſewhere produced. *Damon*'s Complaint, in the former Part of the eighth Eclogue, is *tragical*, and ends thus:

Præceps aerii ſpecula de montis in undas
Deferar; extremum hoc munus morientis habeto.

From yon aerial Rock
Headlong I'll plunge into the foamy Deep.
Take this laſt Gift, which dying I bequeath.

But the Thoughts and Diction of the fourth Eclogue, I before obſerv'd, favour much of the Heroic.

The Pleaſure that ariſes from this Kind of Poetry, is owing to thoſe beautiful rural Scenes, which it repreſents; and to that innate Love, which human Nature, depraved as it is, ſtill retains for its primitive Simplicity. Simplicity and the Country I join together, becauſe in Fact they were both united. We are born with a Love for a Country Life, for Nature always pleaſes us more than Art, not only as it is prior to it in Point of Time, but as the Works of God are more perfect, and more various, than thoſe of Men. Nay, Art itſelf is then moſt pleaſing, when it repreſents Nature. Thus Architecture affects the Mind with leſs Pleaſure and Wonder than Poetry, or its Siſter Painting; becauſe that is the Effect of Art only, theſe of Nature likewiſe. And tho' it may be the Buſineſs of one Art to deſcribe another, yet it never is ſo ſucceſsfully employ'd, as when Nature ſits for the Deſcription.

Thus,

Thus, in Painting, the Proſpect of a magnificent Structure is beautiful; but how much more agreeable is *that* which is diverſified with Woods, Flowers, Rivers, Mountains, Cottages, Birds, Flocks, Herds, and Husbandmen? And how much would the Pleaſure be ſtill heighten'd, could the Picture convey to us the Fragrancy of Flowers, the Warbling of Birds, the Lowing of Oxen, the Bleating of Sheep, and all thoſe other Gratifications that are the Objects, not of the Sight, but of the Hearing, and other Senſes. Since Nature, then, and the Country, are the ſame, and Cities the Effect of Art and Refinement; it is no Wonder, if the former has the Preference. It pleads Preſcription for our Choice; if we date our own Infancy from that of the World, we are all by Birth Inhabitants of the Fields and Woods: Thither, therefore, we naturally tend, and, as *Ovid* ſays, leſs juſtly, upon another Occaſion,

[z] —— *documenta damus, qua ſimus origine nati.*
Give Proofs of our Original.

For, I'll be bold to ſay, that they who prefer a City Life, have a natural Affection for a Country one. It is *Horace's* Obſervation:

[a] *Nempe inter varias nutritur ſilva columnas,*
Laudaturque domus, longos quæ proſpicit agros;
Naturam expellas furca, tamen uſque recurret.
That Houſe is moſt eſteem'd, he wiſely builds,
That hath a Proſpect to the open Fields.
Strive to expel ſtrong Nature, 'tis in vain,
With doubled Force ſhe will return again. *Creech.*

And thoſe that make the City Life their Choice, do ſo, as the Schoolmen ſpeak, only *by Accident*; either to indulge their Vices and Extravagancies; or on account of ſome Inconveniencies which the Coun-

[z] Met. L. I. ℣ 415. [a] Lib. I. Ep. X. 21.

try

try *ſometimes* labours under; as the Want of Company, or the Opportunity of gaining or increaſing a Fortune; not out of any Diſtaſte of the Pleaſures of the Country. Who can help ſympathizing with *Horace*'s Citizen, and wiſh him Succeſs in ſo reaſonable a Requeſt?

[b] *O rus, quando ego te aſpiciam? quandoque licebit*
Nunc veterum libris, nunc ſomno, & inertibus horis,
Ducere ſollicitæ jucunda oblivia vitæ?

Oh! when ſhall I enjoy my Country Seat?
Oh! when remov'd from Noiſe to quiet Peace,
Amidſt my learned Books, my Sleep and Eaſe,
While Hours do ſmoothly flow, and free from Strife
Forget the Troubles of a buſy Life? *Creech.*

And it is impoſſible to read *Virgil*'s Deſcription of the Country, in his ſecond *Georgic*, without being in Love with the Subject, as well as the Poet. Upon the whole, ſince Innocence and the Country are even now ſo agreeable to human Nature, it is eaſy to ſee from what Source the Pleaſure of Paſtoral Poetry ſprings.

As *Theocritus* is the firſt that attempted this Way of Writing, ſo has he excell'd all others that have follow'd him. *Virgil* copies, and in ſome Places literally tranſlates him. He has ſometimes, however, ventur'd to deviate from his Original, by throwing in a Mixture of the Sublime. If *Theocritus*'s are truer Paſtorals; *Virgil*'s may be ſaid, *perhaps*, to be the better Poems. I ſpeak this with ſome Heſitation; for, it muſt be own'd, the *Idyllia* are truly beautiful; and the Author of them, I think, ought to be rank'd among the beſt Poets. The Sweetneſs of his Verſification (owing partly to his own Ingenuity, and partly to his Doric Dialect) is equall'd by none.

[b] Lib. II. Sat. VI. ℣ 56.

Take,

Take, only as a Specimen, what firſt offers, the very Beginning of the firſt *Idyllium:*

Θ. Ἀδύ τι τὸ ψιθύρισμα, καὶ ἁ πίτυς, αἰπόλε, τήνα,
Ἃ ποτὶ ταῖς παγαῖσι, μελίσδεται· ἀδὺ δὲ καὶ τύ
Συρίσδες· μετὰ Πᾶνα τὸ δεύτερον ἆθλον ἀποισῇ.
κ.λ.

Αι. Ἄδιον, ὦ ποιμαὶν, τὸ τεὸν μέλος, ἢ τὸ κατ' ἀχὲς
Τὰν ἀπὸ τᾶς πέτρας καταλείβεται ὑψόθεν ὕδωρ.
Αἰκὰ ταὶ Μῶσαι τὸν ὄϊδα δῶρον ἄγωνται,
Ἄρνα τὺ σακίταν λαψῇ γέρας· αἰ δὲ κ' ἀρέσκῃ
Τήναις ἄρνα λαβεῖν, τὺ δὲ τὰν ὄϊν ὕστερον ἀξεῖς.

Θ. Λῇς, ποτὶ τᾶν νυμφᾶν, λῇς, αἰπόλε, τῇδε καθίξας, κ.λ.

Thyr. Goatherd, that Pine-tree's Boughs by yonder Spring,
In pleaſing Murmurs mix, and ſweetly ſing:
And thou doſt ſweetly pipe; dear charming Swain,
And well deſerv'ſt the next Reward to *Pan*, &c.

Goat. And ſweeter Notes thy Pipe, dear Shepherd, fill,
Than murm'ring Springs, that roll from yonder Hill
When Muſes claim a Sheep, a Lamb's thy Due;
When they a Lamb, thou ſhalt receive a Ewe.
Creech.

Thyrſis then proceeds to lament, in the ſofteſt Verſe that is poſſible, *Daphnis*'s unhappy Love, the Beginning of which only I ſhall recite to you:

Πᾷ ποκ' ἆρ' ἦς' ὅτε Δάφνις ἐτάκετο; πᾷ ποκα, νύμφαι;
Ἢ κατὰ Πηνειῶ καλὰ τέμπεα, ἢ κατὰ Πίνδω;
Οὐ γὰρ δὴ ποταμοῖο μέγαν ῥόον εἴχετ' Ἀνάπω,
Οὐδ' Αἴτνας σκοπιὰν, οὐδ' Ἀκιδος ἱερὸν ὕδωρ.

Where

Where were you, Nymphs? Where did the Nymphs reſide?
Where were you then, when *Daphnis* pin'd and dy'd?
On *Pindus'* Top, or *Tempe's* open Plain,
Where careleſs Nymphs, forgetful of the Swain?
For not one Nymph by ſwift *Aſopus* ſtood,
Nor *Ætna's* Cliff, nor *Acis'* ſacred Flood. *Creech.*

Theſe harmonious Lines, *Virgil* imitates, in the following ones, but does not equal.

[c] *Quæ nemora, aut qui vos ſaltus habuere, puellæ, &c.*

What Groves, ye Nymphs, detain'd you hence? what Lawns?

What *Bion* and *Moſchus* have done in this Kind, among the *Greeks*, the Learned are no Strangers to. Among the Latins, we have nothing remaining of *Calphurnius Siculus* and *Aurelius Nemeſianus*, but their Names*. The Syrinx, or Shepherd's Pipe; the Form, the Number, and the Manner of diſpoſing the *Oaten Reeds*; the Names of the firſt Inventors of this Sort of Poetry, and other Things of the like

[c] Eclog. X. 9.

* A ſmall Miſtake, which, I ſuppoſe, *Joannes Antonius Viperanus* led our Author into, tho' *Voſſius* expreſly guards againſt it. *Inter Latinos unum habemus Virgilium —— quem liceat imitari*, ſays *Anton. Viperanus*; from whence *Voſſius* imagines he never ſaw theſe two Bucolic Writers, (which is more than his Words neceſſarily imply) and takes Care to let us know, we have four Eclogues of *Nemeſianus*, and ſeven of *Calpurnius*. Mr. *Fontenelle* gives no diſadvantageous Character of both of them, and, in ſome Particulars, prefers *Calpurnius* to *Virgil* himſelf. *Fabricius* mentions ſeven or eight Editions of theſe two Poets, and they may be ſeen in the *Corpus Poetarum Latinorum*, publiſh'd in our Author's Time.

Nature,

Nature, I paſs over, as foreign to my Province. Whoever is ſtudious this Way, may conſult the Writers of poetical Hiſtory. I would only obſerve, that it ſeems univerſally agreed upon, that Paſtoral owes its Riſe and Increaſe to *Sicily*.

I cannot but think it a Poem leſs ſuitable to modern Times, on account of the Difference in the Circumſtances of human Life, from what it was anciently. As the Condition of Shepherds is now mean and contemptible; it ſeems too forced a Profopopœia to affix to them any Character of Politeneſs, or to introduce them as Men of Wealth and Education: Theſe Things are contradictory to Truth, and therefore leave no Room for Fiction. The very Foundation, then, of Paſtorals, as they are accommodated to the preſent Times, ſeems wholly taken away. But ſetting aſide this, it muſt be own'd, ſeveral of the Moderns have attempted them very ſucceſsfully, both in their own Tongue, and in *Latin*. The *Italians* and *French* generally want the Bucolic Genius: Their Shepherds are too genteel; as well bred as Citizens at leaſt, if not as Courtiers, and fall into other Abſurdities of the ſame Kind. Our Countryman *Spencer* has ſucceeded much better; and one or two of the preſent Age ſeem juſtly to have deſerv'd the Prize.

LECTURE

LECTURE XV.

Of DIDACTIC *or* PRECEPTIVE POETRY.

HUMAN Nature, at the ſame Time it is deſirous of Knowledge, is cautious of confeſſing its Want of it. The Precepts, therefore, deſign'd for its Information, muſt not be obtruded with Moroſeneſs, but inſinuated with Mildneſs; and even its Vanity ſoothed, to remove its Ignorance. Inſtructions are the better receiv'd, and ſink the deeper upon the Mind, in proportion to the Addreſs with which they are convey'd. There's a Sort of Obſequiouſneſs due from the Teacher to the Scholar, and even in this Senſe that Maxim of *Juvenal* holds true:

[d] *Maxima debetur puero reverentia.*

Hence it is, that Precepts deliver'd in Verſe, are imbib'd with ſo much Pleaſure; and are held in ſo great Eſteem, that they conſtitute one diſtinct Species of Poetry. Many Rules we have already given, concerning the other Branches of it, and are now come to teach even the Art of Teaching. Upon this Subject I am under little Temptation of rifling the Stores of the Learned: I don't know one that has treated of it, except the ingenious Author of the *Eſſay on Virgil's Georgics*, prefix'd to Mr. *Dryden*'s

[d] Sat. XIV. ℣ 47.

Tranſlation

Tranſlation of them. And he, indeed, has ſo exhauſted the Subject, that it is as hard to come after him, as it is after the great *Dryden*, or his greater Original.

From what has been ſaid, it appears, that Poetry is in its Nature adapted to deliver Precepts of any Kind, which are ſure to be learnt with more Eaſe, and retain'd the more faithfully by the Help of it. Laws, and religious Maxims, were anciently promulged in Verſe; and Prieſts and Poets were the ſame: And even to this Day it is a prudent Cuſtom to have religious Leſſons drawn up in Verſe for the Sake of Youth: In this Reſpect it may more truly be ſaid

[e] —— *pueris dant cruſtula blandi*
Doctores, elementa velint ut diſcere prima.

Thus Teachers bribe their Boys with Figs and Cake,
To mind their Books. *Creech.*

For by Poetry the very *Elements* that are taught are ſoften'd into Allurements. The common Grammar, we ſee, is Verſe; and tho' the Language of it, indeed, is Proſe, whatever the Meaſure be, yet it is a ſufficient Proof, that, in the Opinion of the paſt and preſent Age, Precepts and Poetry are no ways inconſiſtent: And it were to be wiſh'd, that not only Rules of Rhetoric and Logic, but of Philoſophy, and all other Sciences, were drawn up in a more entertaining Manner. Not that *technical Words*, or *Terms of Art*, as they are call'd, ſhould be excluded; for it is impoſſible any Science ſhould be without them: But they might be ſo dreſs'd up, as to invite, not deter the Pains of the Learner. But theſe are Obſervations leſs material to our Purpoſe, and I only make them by the Way. I now proceed to obſerve, that there are four Kinds of Didactic Poems, *viz.*

[e] Hor. L. I. *ſ.* 25.

thoſe

those that relate to moral Duties; or philosophical Speculations; or the Business or Pleasures of Life; or, lastly, to Poetry itself.

Of the *moral* Poems we shall say but little. We have elsewhere observ'd, that these have scarce any Thing of Poetry in them but their Measure, and therefore hardly deserve to be class'd under the Head of it: Such are *Pythagoras*'s *Golden Verses*; the *Sentences* of *Theognis*; the Ποίημα Νουθετικὸν of *Phocylides*. We have nothing of this Kind of the *Latin* Writers, or of our own*, worth mentioning; and, in short, they have nothing in common with a Poem, except this, that a Life led according to the strictest Rules of Virtue, resembles the best, and the noblest.

But, on the other Hand, nothing shines more in Verse, than Disquisitions of natural History. We then see the strictest Reasoning join'd to the politest Expression. Poetry and Philosophy are happily united: The latter affords abundant Matter for Description; it opens a large Field for Fancy, and strikes out new Ideas, which the other expresses with suitable Dignity. What Subject can be a more poetical one than

[f] —— *Errantem Lunam, Solisque labores,*
Unde hominum genus, & pecudes, unde imber, & ignes,
Unde tremor terris, qua vi maria alta tumescant
Obicibus ruptis, rursusque in seipsa residant;
Arcturum, pluviasque Hyadas, geminosque Triones:
Quid tantum Oceano properent se tingere soles
Hyberni, vel quæ tardis mora noctibus obstet?

* Mr. *Pope* has since struck out a new Scheme of Ethic Poems, in which he has deserv'd as much of the Moral World, as Sir *Isaac Newton* did of the Natural.

[f] Virg. Æn. L. I. 746. & Georg. II. 479, &c.

The wand'ring Moon, the Labours of the Sun;
Whence Men, and Beaſts, whence Rain, and Lightnings come;
The Conſtellations of the northern Cars,
Arcturus, and the ſhow'ry *Hyades:*
Why Suns, in Winter, haſte ſo ſwift to tinge
Themſelves in Ocean; and what Cauſe retards
The ſluggiſh Nights.

What can be more ſuitable to the Dignity of a Poem, than to celebrate the Works of the great Creator? What more agreeable to the Variety of one, than to deſcribe the Journies of the heavenly Orbs, the Riſe of Thunder, and other Meteors, the Motion of the Earth, and the Tides of the Sea; the attractive Force of the Magnet, the impulſive Motion of Light, and the ſlower Progreſſion of Sound; and innumerable other Wonders, in the unbounded Storehouſe of Nature. I ſhall ſay nothing, at preſent, of *Aratus* among the *Greeks*, or of *Manilius* among the *Latin* Writers; *Lucretius*, alone, ſhall ſuffice, inſtead of all the reſt. He, indeed, is ſo far from celebrating the Creator, that he ſuppoſes there is none; but, allowing him his Hypotheſis, his Poem is truly philoſophical. He had deſerv'd much greater Praiſe, had he corrected his Notions in Philoſophy, and his Style in Poetry; for in this Particular, alſo, he is often deficient. The Aſperity of his Verſification muſt be imputed rather to the Times he liv'd in, (*viz.* the Age between *Ennius* and *Virgil*) than to the Subject he treated of; which, whatever the common Opinion be, not only admits of the Harmony of Numbers, but requires it. The following Directions of *Virgil* about burning the Turf, part of which we cited before, upon another Occaſion, don't loſe any Thing of their Philoſophy by their Smoothneſs:

Sive

[g] *Sive inde occultas vires, & pabula terræ*
Pinguia concipiunt, sive illis omne per ignem
Excoquitur vitium, atque exudat inutilis humor;
Seu plures calor ille vias, & cæca relaxat
Spiramenta, novas veniat qua succus in herbas:
Seu durat magis, & venas astringit hiantes,
Ne tenues pluviæ, rapidive potentia solis
Acrior, aut Boreæ penetrabile frigus adurat.

Whether from thence they secret Strength receive,
And richer Nutriment: Or by the Fire
All latent Mischief, and redundant Juice,
Oozing sweats off: Or whether the same Heat
Opens the hidden Pores, that new Supplies
Of Moisture may refresh the recent Blades.
Or hardens more, and with astringent Force
Closes the gaping Veins; left driv'ling Show'rs
Shou'd soak too deep, or the Sun's parching Rays,
Or *Boreas'* piercing Cold shou'd dry the Glebe.

And even *Lucretius* himself is sometimes more flowing and sonorous, not only when he addresses himself to *Venus*, as in the following beautiful Passage:

[h] *Te, Dea, te fugiunt venti, te nubila cœli,*
Adventumque tuum; tibi suaves dædala tellus
Summittit flores; tibi rident æquora ponti,
Pacatumque nitet, diffuso lumine, cœlum.

At thy Approach, great Goddess, strait remove
Whate'er are rough, and Enemies to Love;
The Clouds dispers'e, the Winds do swiftly wast,
And reverently in Murmurs breathe their last.
The Earth with various Art (for thy warm Pow'rs
That dull Mass feels) puts forth her gawdy Flow'rs,
To pleasure thee, ev'n lazy Lux'ry toils,
The rougheſt Sea puts on smooth Looks, and Smiles:

[g] Georg. I. 86. [h] Lib. I. ℣ 6.

The

The well-pleas'd Heav'n assumes a brighter Ray
At thy Approach, and makes a double Day.
Creech.

But sometimes, likewise, when he unfolds the Principles of Matter, the Causes of Things, and the Phænomena of Nature. It is certain, *Virgil* is much indebted to him, tho' he has much improv'd his Manner.

Another Imperfection in *Lucretius* is, that he never makes any Excursions into poetical Fiction. Some Digressions he has, but they are rather philosophical, than poetical; and therefore don't diversify the Subject, nor afford the Reader sufficient Refreshment. He has some, indeed, philosophical; but then they are impious, such as reason against Providence, the Foundations of Religion, and the Immortality of the Soul. One, however, I must except, that upon the Plague of *Athens*; which contains, indeed, a poetical Description, but nothing of poetical Fable. It must be own'd, this Poet reasons too much in the Manner of the Schools, the Philosopher appears too open, he wants the Gentility to conceal his Beard, and temper his Severity. Poetry and Philosophy, indeed, were both to be join'd together, but the one ought to be as the Handmaid to the other; which *Virgil* would not have fail'd to have taken care of, had he been engag'd on such a Subject. Not so *Lucretius*, who appears more a Philosopher than a Poet; and yet of Poets not the meanest: *Virgil*, in his *Georgics*, appears more a Poet than a Husbandman, and yet of Husbandmen the greatest.

I can't see why, in a Work of this Kind, Nature may not be so explain'd, as to admit sometimes of poetical Fiction; in the same Manner that *Virgil* describes the *Cyclops* forging the Thunderbolts?

[i] *Tres imbris torti radios, tres nubis aquoſæ*
Addiderant, rutili tres ignis, & alitis Auſtri:
Fulgores nunc terrificos, ſonitumque, metumque,
Addiderant operi, flammiſque ſequacibus iras.
Three Forks of darted Hail, of wat'ry Cloud
Three more they added; three of glaring Fire,
As many of the winged ſouthern Wind;
Then dreadful Flaſhes, and the roaring Noiſe,
And Rage, and Terror, and avenging Flames.

Here the Formation of the Thunder is poetically feign'd; the Matter and the Adjuncts explain'd phyſically; Philoſophy is made the Baſis, and Poetry the Superſtructure.

I know of no modern Poem of this Sort worth mentioning, except *Buchanan's Sphere*, which is a Work by no means contemptible. But as Natural Philoſophy has, by the Help of Experiments, been lately brought to much greater Perfection than ever; this Kind of Poetry, no doubt, would have made proportionable Advances, if the ſame Age that ſhew'd a *Boyle*, a *Halley*, and a *Newton*, had produc'd a *Virgil*; or if we had not been ſo much worſe Poets than the Ancients, as we are better Philoſophers. We have, indeed, ſome poetical Eſſays on the [k] *Circulation of the Blood*, the *Air-Pump*, the *Microſcope*, and the *Teleſcope*, and the like: But theſe are ſhort *Deſcriptions*, no ways reducible to the Species of Poetry before us. 'Tis true, they may in ſome Senſe be reduc'd under the Title of *Didactic*, tho' not of *Preceptive* Poetry; they *teach* by *Deſcription*, not by *Precept*.

But the next Kind I mention'd, relating to the *Buſineſs* or *Pleaſures* of Life, do both. Under this Head *Virgil*'s *Georgics* ſtand foremoſt, containing the moſt uſeful Rules for Husbandry in all its Branches,

[i] Æn. VIII. 429. [k] Muſ. Angl. Vol. I. & II.

Agriculture, the Method of raiſing Trees, or Cattle, or tending of Bees. The Pleaſure that naturally reſults from reading them, is chiefly owing to the Pleaſure and Advantage which attends a Country Life. Here *Virgil* has *imitated Heſiod*, as he has *Theocritus* in his Eclogues, and *Homer* in the *Æneis*; I ſhould rather have ſaid, has *exceeded* each in their peculiar Way of Writing, unleſs, perhaps, we ought to except *Theocritus*: But *Heſiod* he has left ſo far behind him, that he ſcarce deſerves to be mention'd in the Compariſon. The good old Man of *Aſtræa* is at beſt but a downright Yeoman, whereas *Virgil* appears with the Learning of a Scholar, and the Elegance of a Gentleman. From his *Georgics*, then, all the Maxims that relate to this Subject muſt be illuſtrated.

The firſt Rule I would lay down, is, That we ought to ſelect with Judgment ſuch Circumſtances as are capable of ſhining in Verſe; not that we are to omit the graveſt Precepts, but to expreſs them by their moſt poetical Adjuncts:

[1] *Jam vinctæ vites, jam falcem arbuſta reponunt*;
Jam canit extremos effœtus vinitor antes:
Sollicitanda tamen tellus, pulviſque movendus;
Et jam maturis metuendus Jupiter uvis.

And now the Vines are ty'd, nor longer ask
The Pruning Hook; the weary Dreſſer now
With Songs ſalutes his outmoſt Ranks complete:
Yet muſt we ſtill ſollicit the dull Mold;
And the ripe Grapes have ſtill to fear from *Jove*.

I need not explain myſelf any farther. To produce all the Inſtances of this Kind, would be to tranſcribe the *Georgics*. 'Tis with the ſame View the great Author of them is ſo copious upon the different Pro-

[1] Geor. II. 416.

perties

perties of Trees and Cattle; the Combat of Bulls; the Conduct and Politics of Bees, and the like.

To vary the Form of Inſtruction, and to add Life to his Precepts, he ſometimes inſtils them as Matters of Fact, and conveys them under the Appearance of a Narration:

[m] *Quid dicam, jacto qui ſemine cominus arva*
Inſequitur, cumuloſque ruit male pinguis arenæ?
What ſhou'd I ſay of him; who, having ſown
His Grain, with ceaſeleſs Induſtry proceeds,
And ſpreads abroad the Heaps of barren Sand?

[n] *Quid, qui, ne gravidis procumbat culmus ariſtis,*
Luxuriem ſegetum tenera depaſcit in herba?
Or what of him; who, leſt the Stalks, o'ercharg'd
By the plump Ears, ſhou'd ſink beneath their Weight,
Crops their Luxuriance in the tender Blade?

And in another Place:

[o] *Et quidam ſeros hyberni ad luminis ignes*
Invigilat, ferroque faces inſpicat acuto;
Aut dulcis muſti Vulcano decoquit humorem,
Et foliis undam trepidi deſpumat aheni.
One watches late by Light of Winter Fires;
And with the ſharpen'd Steel for Torches ſplits
The ſpiky Wood.——
Or of ſweet Muſt boils down the luſcious Juice;
And skims with Leaves the trembling Cauldron's Flood.

Sometimes he foretels the ill Conſequences of a contrary Practice:

[p] *Quod niſi & aſſiduis terram inſectabere raſtris,*
Et ſonitu terrebis aves, & ruris opaci

[m] Geor. I. 104. [n] ℣ 111. [o] ℣ 291.
[p] ℣ 155.

Falce premes umbras, votiſque vocaveris imbrem;
Heu! magnum alterius fruſtra ſpectabis acervum,
Concuſſaque famem in ſilvis ſolabere quercu.

Unleſs then with aſſiduous Rakes thou work
The Ground, and chaſe the Birds with ſcaring Noiſe;
And with the crooked Pruner lop the Shades
Of ſpreading Trees, and pray to Heav'n for Show'rs,
Another's Store, in vain, alas! admir'd,
Thou ſhalt behold, and from a ſhaken Oak
Thy hungry Appetite in Woods relieve.

Or he deſcribes the ill Effects he has obſerv'd to attend it:

[q] *Semina vidi equidem multos medicare ſerentes,*
Et nitro prius, & nigra perfundere amurca, &c.
Vidi lecta diu, & multo ſpectata labore,
Degenerare tamen.

Many I've known to medicate their Seed,
In Nitre ſteep'd, and the black Lees of Oil;
And tho' o'er mod'rate Fire
Moiſt, and precipitated, and with Pain
Long try'd, and choſen, oft they have been prov'd
Degen'rate.

By this agreeable Variety the Reader's Attention is wonderfully awaken'd, tho' he ſees not the Reaſon of it; and the Poet's Art is the more to be admir'd, becauſe it eſcapes Obſervation.

But the greateſt Ornaments of this ſort of Poems, are the frequent *Excurſions* into ſome more noble Subject, which ſeem'd naturally to ariſe out of that the Poet is treating of. Sometimes, for Inſtance, he runs back into *Hiſtory* and *Antiquity*, or, perhaps, the very Origine of Things:

[r] *Ante Jovem nulli ſubigebant arva coloni, &c.*

[q] ℘ 193. [r] ℘ 125.

E're

E're *Jove* was King, no Hinds ſubdu'd the Glebe.

And again:

[s] *Prima Ceres ferro mortales vertere terram*
Inſtituit, &c.

'Twas *Ceres* firſt taught Mortals with the Share
To cut the Ground.

Sometimes he makes Reflections on the Condition of Human Life:

[t] *Optima quæque dies miſeris mortalibus ævi*
Prima fugit, ſubeunt morbi, triſtiſque ſenectus,
&c.

The beſt of Life, which wretched Mortals ſhare,
Firſt flies away: Diſeaſes, ſick Old Age,
And Pain, and Death's Inclemency, ſucceed.

At another Time he heightens his Subject with *Aſtronomy*, and *Natural Philoſophy*; an Inſtance of which I have already cited, from the *Georgics*: But I cannot help adding one more, not only as it makes very remarkably for our preſent Purpoſe, but is, moreover, an abundant Proof of what I before advanc'd, that Natural Philoſophy might be expreſs'd in the ſweeteſt Numbers, and conſequently is capable of much ſmoother Verſification than that of *Lucretius*. The Poet, then, having mention'd the Noiſe of Crows as a Sign of fair Weather, proceeds thus:

[u] *Haud equidem credo, quia ſit divinitus illis*
Ingenium, & rerum fato prudentia major:
Verum ubi tempeſtas, & cœli mobilis humor
Mutavere vias, & Jupiter humidus Auſtris
Denſat erant quæ rara modo, & quæ denſa, relaxat;
Vertuntur ſpecies animorum; & pectora motus
Nunc alios; alios, dum nubila ventus agebat,

[s] *Ibid.* 147. [t] Geor. III. 66. [u] Geor. I. 415.

Concipiunt: Hinc ille avium concentus in agris,
Et lætæ pecudes, & ovantes gutture corvi.

Not that I think an Ingeny divine
To them is giv'n, or Preſcience of Events
In Fate ſuperior: But when changeful Winds
Alter the various Temper of the Sky;
And the moiſt Ether what before was denſe
Relaxes, and condenſes what was rare:
The ſhifting Phantaſms of their Minds are turn'd;
And now within their Breaſts new Paſſions move,
Diff'rent from thoſe they felt, when driving Blaſts
Diſpers'd the Clouds: Hence that Concent of Birds
Chirping in Chorus; hence the Joy of Beaſts,
And Flocks of Crows exulting in the Fields.

Often he digreſſes into *Fable* and *Fiction*, as in that beautiful Epiſode of *Orpheus* and *Eurydice*: And ſtill more often into *poetical Deſcriptions*, as thoſe of the perpetual Spring in *Italy*, and the bleak Winter in *Scythia*; of the Happineſs of a Country Life; of the various Prognoſtications of the Weather; of the Prodigies that foretold the Death of *Cæſar*; and, to name no more, of the Murrain among the Cattle. Of which, I wonder the foremention'd Author of the *Eſſay on Virgil's Georgics* ſhould ſay, that *Virgil* ſeems in it to have ſummon'd up all his Might to equal the Deſcription of the Plague in *Lucretius*, ſince the one is as much beyond the other in the Ingenuity of the Compoſition, as it is inferior to it, in the Dignity of the Subject; and the Plague in *Lucretius* is exceeded by that of *Virgil*, as much as Beaſts are by Men. Upon the whole, this is deſervedly eſteem'd the moſt finiſh'd Piece of all *Virgil*'s Works; I need not add, that it is the compleateſt in its Kind, of any we now have, or the World ever ſaw.

The Moderns have produc'd nothing in this Kind, except *Rapin*'s Books of Gardening, and the celebrated

brated Poem on Cyder by an ingenious Author, that not long ſince reſided among us; who, if he had enjoy'd the Advantage of *Virgil*'s Language, would have been ſecond to *Virgil* in a much nearer Degree. As long as the fluctuating State of our Tongue will permit, this *Engliſh Georgic* ſhall infallibly flouriſh,

—— *& honos erit huic quoque Pomo.*

And to this Apple Honours ſhall be paid.

Among the *Pleaſures* of a Country Life, we may reckon *Hunting*, *Fiſhing*, *Hawking*, and the like; which are excellent Subjects for Didactic Verſe, and are very fruitful of poetic Matter. We have only ſome Eſſays of this Sort, and thoſe by modern Hands, except only *Gratius's Cynægeticon*, which owes all its Value to Fortune, rather than any true Merit of its own; *viz.* that it has the Advantage of being writ in the *Auguſtan* Age, and being recommended by *Ovid*, a Contemporary, in the following Verſe,

Aptaque venanti Gratius arma dabit.

And *Gratius* to the Hunter Arms ſupplies.

Oppian's Halieutica and *Cynegetica* are ſcarce to be reckon'd among the Writings of the Ancients, but to be plac'd rather in the Middle Age*.

The Rules for writing upon theſe Subjects are the ſame with what I have mention'd under the *Georgics*; I have no Occaſion, therefore, to add new ones here. The ſame may be ſaid for that Species of Poetry, that conſiſts in teaching the *Art of Poetry*; the Man-

* *Nemeſianus*'s *Cynegeticon*, I ſuppoſe, is omitted, as being ſtill of a later Age, tho' he had the good Fortune, as *Voſſius* obſerves, to be read in the Schools in the Time of *Charles the Great*; and may ſtill bear to be read in better Times than when Emperors could not write their own Name.

ner of Writing is the ſame, as far as the Difference of the Matter will admit.

The Pieces that have been writ in this Way, are known to all; and Poetry ſeems never to have employ'd her Time better, than upon herſelf. The Ancients have left us only one Specimen of this Kind, but ſuch as may compenſate for all the reſt, *Horace's* Epiſtle to the *Piſo's*; a Work that ought to be got by Heart by all true Lovers of Poetry, in which 'tis hard to ſay, whether we ſhould admire the Wit or Judgment moſt, both in the Choice of the Precepts, and the Manner of delivering them. Among the Moderns, the celebrated *French* Poet [w], and ſeveral of our Countrymen [x], have ſucceeded, each in his native Tongue, very happily.

Theſe are the ſeveral Kinds of Didactic Poetry, with which the Writers of the paſt or preſent Age have furniſh'd us. In this Number I might reckon Ovid *of the Art of Love*; but I paſs it by, on account of its Levity, not to ſay its Indecency. Much leſs excuſable are *Claudius Quillotus*, and *Hieronymus Fracaſtorius*, among the Moderns; who, it were to be wiſh'd, had choſen Subjects leſs obnoxious to Cenſure.

I would, however, obſerve, that any Thing in the World may be the Subject of this Kind of Poem: The Buſineſs or Recreations of the City, or the Country; even the Conduct of common Life, and civil Converſe: But none more ſuitable than Arts and Sciences. And among thoſe, which of them ſo proper to receive Inſtructions from the Hand of Poetry, as its two Siſter Arts, Painting and Muſic? In the former, particularly, there is Room for the moſt entertaining Precepts concerning the Diſpoſal of Colours; the Arrangement of Lights and Shades; the ſecret Attractives of Beauty; the various Ideas

[w] *Boileau.* [x] Earl of *Roſcommon*, and Mr. *Pope.*

which

which make up that one; the diſtinguiſhing between the Attitudes proper to either Sex, and every Paſſion; the repreſenting Proſpects, of Buildings, Battles, or the Country; and, laſtly, concerning the Nature of Imitation, and the Power of Painting. What a boundleſs Field of Invention is here? what Room for Deſcription, Compariſon, and poetical Fable? How eaſy the Tranſition, at any Time, from the Draught to the Original, from the Shadow to the Subſtance? And, from hence, what noble Excurſions may be made into Hiſtory, into Panegyric upon the greateſt Beauties or Hero's of the paſt or preſent Age? The Task, I confeſs, is difficult; but, according to that noted, but true Saying, [x] So are all Things that are great. Let the Man, therefore, that is equal to ſuch an Undertaking, be fir'd with a noble Ambition to attempt a Work untouch'd before; and let the *Georgics*, which have been our great Example, furniſh him with this noble Incentive:

[y] —— *Tentanda via eſt, qua me quoque poſſim*
Tollere humo, victorque virûm volitare per ora.
A Way by me, too, muſt be try'd, to raiſe
Myſelf from Earth, and fill the Mouths of Men.

[x] Difficilia quæ Pulchra. [y] Geor. III. 8.

LECTURE XVI.

Spoke in the THEATRE, before the *Philological Act*, *July* 10, 1713.

Of LYRIC POETRY.

THE Subject I now engage in, however mean it may appear in my Hands, is not only noble in itſelf; but, at this Time, peculiarly ſeaſonable: At this Time, I ſay, when Odes and Muſic are the Inſtruments of our preſent Feſtivity, and Peace reſtor'd to *Europe*, under the Conduct of the greateſt and beſt of Queens, the happy Occaſion of it. And no Kind of Poetry is ſo proper to expreſs either our Joy, or the Heroes Triumphs, as the Lyric:

[z] *Quem virum, aut heroa, lyra, vel acri*
Tibia ſumes celebrare, Clio?
What Man, what Hero wilt thou claim,
What Godhead, Muſe? For whom inſpire
Thy warbling Pipe or Lyre? *Oldſworth.*

Since, then, it is incumbent upon me to bear a Part in this Solemnity, let me prevail with my uſual Audience, and thoſe additional Gueſts that make up

[z] Hor. Carm. Lib. I. Od. 12.

this

this chearful Aſſembly, to reſtrain their Impatience for the Verſes and Orations, that are to follow, only while I lay before them the Original and Antiquity of Lyric Poetry, the diſtinguiſhing Properties of it, the Variety of its Matter, and the Difference between modern Writers in this Way, and the ancient.

That this is the moſt ancient Kind of Poem, is pretty evident. *Jubal*, in ſacred Writ, is ſaid to be the firſt Inventor of muſical Inſtruments; and little Doubt is to be made, but vocal Muſic was added to them. And we are farther told, by a *Jewiſh* Author, of venerable Antiquity[a], tho' his Works are not admitted into the Canon, that the ſame *which found out muſical Tunes, recited Verſes in Writing.* We have before obſerv'd, that Poetry took its Riſe from thoſe Feſtival Hymns which were ſung at the Concluſion of Harveſt, in Gratitude to the Deity. Odes, therefore, and Poetry, date their Original from the ſame Æra: And, in Truth, if we conſider the internal Motions of the Soul, it will ſeem very probable that Poetry, which is ſo peculiarly adapted to expreſs the ſeveral Emotions of Joy, or Praiſe, or Gratitude, owes its Riſe to Nature herſelf, and was therefore join'd with Muſic. We have no Inſtance of Poetry older than the celebrated Song, or rather Ode, of *Moſes*[b]. The Antiquity of the other Hymns mention'd in ſacred Hiſtory, and, particularly, the Collection of them in the Book of *Pſalms*, is ſo well known, that I ſhall dwell no longer upon this Particular.

As to the Nature of the Lyric Poem, it is, of all Kinds of Poetry, the moſt poetical; and is as diſtinct, both in Style, and Thought, from the reſt, as Poetry in general is from Proſe. I have before obſerv'd, the Peculiarity of its Diction; the Thought, only, now comes under Conſideration. Now this is

[a] Son of *Sirach*, *Ecclus* xliv. 5. [b] *Deut.* xv.

the boldeſt of all other Kinds, full of Rapture, and elevated from common Language the moſt that is poſſible; ſo that what *Horace* ſays at the Beginning of one of his Odes, may not improperly be applied to all the reſt:

[c] *Odi profanum vulgus, & arceo.*

I hate, I ſcorn the Vulgar Throng.

Some Odes there are, likewiſe, in the free and looſe Manner, which ſeem to avoid all Method, and yet are conducted by a very clear one; which affect Tranſitions, ſeemingly, without Art, but, for that Reaſon, have the more of it; which are above Connexion, and delight in Exclamations, and frequent Invocation of the Muſes; which begin and end abruptly, and are carried on thro' a Variety of Matter with a ſort of divine *Pathos*, above Rules and Laws, and without Regard to the common Forms of Grammar.

Hence, then, we learn the chief Property of Lyric Poetry, *viz.* that it abounds with a Sort of Liberty which conſiſts in Digreſſions and Excurſions. *Pindar* ſet his Succeſſors this Example, inſomuch that this Style, when applied to Odes, is generally call'd Pindaric; not that he is to be eſteem'd the Inventor of it: For it is plain that he, and the reſt of the *Grecians*, receiv'd their Learning from the Nations of the Eaſt, the *Jews* and *Phœnicians:* And it is well known, the eaſtern Eloquence abounded not only with Metaphors, and bold Hyperboles, but in long Digreſſions; as is ſufficiently evident from the ſacred Writings. The *Roman Pindar* often imitates the *Theban*, and ſometimes exceeds him, even in his characteriſtic Excellence. Thus in that Ode, where he addreſſes himſelf to the Ship that bore ſo valuable a Freight as *Virgil*,

[c] Lib. III. Od. 1.

Sic

[a] *Sic te, Diva potens Cypri,* &c.

at the Concluſion of the eighth Verſe, he inveighs againſt the Temerity of Mankind, and purſues this Argument to the End of the Ode, which is not a very ſhort one. So, again, ſpeaking of the Tree which had like to have fallen upon him,

[b] *Ille & nefaſto te poſuit die,* &c.

a few Lines after he adds;

Quam pene furvæ regna Proſerpinæ,
Et judicantem vidimus Æacum,
Sedeſque deſcriptas piorum; &
Æoliis fidibus querentem
Sappho puellis de popularibus;
Et Te ſonantem plenius aureo,
Alcæe, plectro, dura navis,
Dura fugæ mala, dura belli?

How near was I to Realms of Night?
Where *Minos* does in Judgment ſit;
Where pious Shades walk o'er the Plains;
Where *Proſerpine* and Darkneſs reigns:
Where *Sappho*'s warbling Meaſures tell
By what diſaſtrous Cauſe ſhe fell:
Alcæus, in ſublimer Strains,
Of Toils by Sea and Land complains. *Oldſw.*

He then expatiates into their Praiſes, and ſo concludes this elegant Ode with them. It is, indeed, juſt Matter of Complaint, that we have only ſome Fragments of both theſe Poets remaining, to whom we owe the Invention of the two chief Kinds of Lyric Poetry. In this looſe Way of Writing, the Poet juſt touches upon the Subject at firſt propos'd, and ſtrait diverts to another:

[a] Lib. I. Od. 3. [b] Lib. II. Od. 13.

Cætera

[f] —— *Cætera fluminis*
Ritu feruntur, nunc medio alveo
Cum pace delabentis Etruſcum
In mare, nunc lapides adeſos
Stirpeſque raptas, & pecus, & domos,
Volventis una, non ſine montium
Clamore, vicinæque ſilvæ;
Cum fera diluvies quietos
Irritat amnes.

All worldly Things, like Waters, flow,
Sometimes too high, ſometimes too low:
Sometimes the even Current gently glides
Down to the Deep, and oft with mighty Roar
Bears Rocks upon its ſwelling Tides,
Sweeps Herds and Houſes from the Shore,
And Trunks of Trees; the Rivers quit their Bounds,
Whilſt ev'ry lofty Hill, and neighb'ring Wood reſounds. *Oldſworth.*

Nothing can deſcribe the unbounded Nature of this Kind of Ode better than thoſe Lines of *Horace*, which, at the ſame Time, give us a lively Inſtance of it. We may add, to the ſame Purpoſe, his Deſcription of the *Theban* Poet;

[g] *Monte decurrens velut amnis, imbres*
Quem ſuper notas aluere ripas,
Fervet, immenſuſque ruit profundo
Pindarus ore.

Pindar's a mighty raging Flood,
That from ſome Mountain flows,
Rapid, and warm, and deep, and loud,
Whoſe Force no Limits knows. *Oldſworth.*

From what has been ſaid, ſome will be induc'd to think, that to write a Lyric Poem, which is indulg'd

[f] Lib. III. Od. 29. [g] Lib. IV. Od. 2.

with

with ſo many Liberties, is the eaſieſt Thing imaginable: But, in Reality, it is the moſt difficult in every Reſpect, except its Shortneſs, as it is the moſt elegant. It demands not only a flowing Imagination, Brightneſs, Life, Sublimity, and Elegance, but the niceſt Art, and fineſt Judgment, ſo as to ſeem luxuriant, and not to be ſo; and under the Shew of tranſgreſſing all Laws, to preſerve them. For it is not impoſſible but a Writer's Fire may be temper'd with the ſevereſt Judgment; and Poets may be ſaid, tho' Lovers cannot, to be *mad with Reaſon*.

Thoſe Digreſſions which quite leave the Subject, and never return to it again, pleaſe me leſs than ſome others of a very different Kind. The former, no doubt, are defenſible, and ſometimes highly commendable; for a Poet is not always oblig'd to dwell upon the ſame Argument from one End to the other; and I would rather call them Tranſitions, than Digreſſions: But the Digreſſions which I chiefly admire, are ſuch as *take Occaſion* from ſome *Adjunct* or *Circumſtance* of the Subject, to paſs on to *ſomewhat elſe* not totally diſtinct from it, with which the Imagination having been diverted for ſome Time, new Matter ſtarts up, and from ſome new Adjunct of that, the Poet is brought back, of a ſudden, to his firſt Deſign. I cannot produce a better Inſtance of this, out of *Horace* himſelf, than from a late Ode of one of our own Countrymen[h], who, ſince he has paid the Debt of Nature, may, without Envy, receive the Tribute of our Praiſe; that beautiful Ode, I mean, upon the Death of the famous Dr. *Pocock*; where the Poet deſcribes his Travels to the Eaſt, in theſe Words[i]:

[h] Mr. *Edmund Smith*, of *Chriſt-Church*, *Oxon.*
[i] Muſ. Angl. Vol. II.

Quin

Quin nunc requiris tecta virentia
Nini ferocis, nunc Babel arduum,
Immane opus! creſcentibuſque
Vertice ſideribus propinquum!
Nequicquam; amici diſparibus ſonis
Eludit aures neſcius artifex,
Linguaſque miratur recentes,
In patriis peregrinus oris.
Veſtitur hinc tot ſermo coloribus,
Quot Tu, Pococki, diſſimilis Tui
Orator effers, &c.

Now *Ninus'* Walls you ſearch with curious Eye,
Now *Babel's* Tow'r, the Rival of the Sky.
In vain! the mad Attempt new Tongues confound,
The Toil eluded by diſcordant Sound:
To his own Sire the Son *Barbarian* grown,
Unletter'd, ſtarts a Language not his own.
Hence various Bounds to Nations ſet by Speech;
But not to You, who, Orator in each,
His proper Tongue th' admiring Native teach.

With what Elegance does the Poet divert from his Purpoſe, that he may bring in a beautiful Deſcription of *Babel*, and the Confuſion of Tongues: Then, with no leſs Elegance, he returns to the Praiſe of his venerable Traveller, ſurprizingly skill'd in moſt of them. Afterwards, with a peculiar Delicacy, his Comment upon *Joel* is hinted at, and from thence Occaſion taken to repreſent that terrible Day of the Lord, which the Prophet ſpeaks of, and then the holy Ardour of his Interpreter:

Ac ſicut albens perpetua nive
Simul favillas, & cineres ſinu
Eructat ardenti, & pruinis
Contiguas rotat Ætna flammas:
Sic te trementem, te nive candidum,
Mens intus urget, mens agit ignea

Sequi

Sequi reluctantem Joelem
Per tonitru, aereasque nubes.
Annon paveſcis, dum Tuba pallidum
Ciet Sionem? dum tremulum polo
Caligat aſtrum, atque incubanti
Terra nigrans tegitur ſub umbra?
Quod agmen! heu! quæ turba ſequacibus
Tremenda flammis! quis ſtrepitantium
Flictus rotarum eſt! O Pococki
Egregie! O animoſe Vatis
Interpres abſtruſi! O ſimili fere
Correpte flamma! ——

As *Ætna*'s lucid with perpetual Snow,
While heaving Flames within its Entrails glow;
O'er the hoar Froſt the raging Fury's ſpread,
And ruddy Flouds of Fire beam round its Head:
So trembling thou, and venerably white,
Thy urging Soul tries ſacred *Sion*'s Height,
Attends thy *Joel*, clad in dark Array,
Where Clouds and Lightnings mark his awful Way.
Hark! doſt not ſhudder while the Trumpet's Sound
The tott'ring Tow'rs of *Solyma* rebound?
Behold what Troops come rolling from afar
With Gleams of Terror, and the Din of War!
In the bright Front conſuming Fires ride,
And Slaughter ſtalks indignant by their Side.
Oh! whither, whither tends thy eager Courſe,
Rapt by thy own, thy kindred Prophet's Force?

The Matter and Thoughts are ſublime and elegant, the Tranſitions artful; and it is, in ſhort, all over wonderful.

This, likewiſe, is a Peculiarity in Lyric Poetry, that (as the Name implies) it is attended with muſical Inſtruments more than any other. *More than any other*, I ſay, becauſe there's no Neceſſity that Odes ſhould be always ſung; they are often repeated:

Nor

Nor is Muſic ſo peculiar to them, as to be ſuitable to no other Poems; for the Flute was anciently join'd with Elegy; and now a-days we ſee other Kinds of Poetry accompanied with Muſic, nay, even Proſe itſelf; tho' anciently, I ſay, it was thought more *peculiarly* adapted to the Ode. Hence we find many Ideas among the Lyrics, that we meet with no where elſe; hence the frequent mention of muſical Inſtruments, I may ſay the frequent Invocation of them.

[k] —— *Age dic Latinum,*
Barbite, carmen.

[l] —— *Nec turpem ſenectam*
Degere, nec cithara carentem.

[m] —— *Si neque tibias*
Euterpe cohibet, nec Polyhymnia
Lesboum refugit tendere barbiton.

Which are Circumſtances that often throw an additional Ornament on a Poem.

The Ancients have left us very imperfect Accounts of their Muſic. They that would ſee a Deſcription of their chief Inſtruments, the Harp and Flute, may conſult *Voſſius*, and others. But the Manner of their *Compoſing* has been ſcarce touch'd upon by any. For my Part, I cannot but think it was more ſimple than our modern Way, and conſiſted of fewer Diviſions. And my Reaſon is, becauſe we meet with very few Encomiums of this Art, or of thoſe that excell'd in it; nay, ſcarce any of their Names are handed down to Poſterity. There's frequent mention, indeed, among the Lyrics, of muſical Inſtruments, as Adjuncts of that Kind of Poetry; but it is ſcarce credible the Ancients ſhould

[k] Hor. Lib I. Od. 32. [l] Lib. I. Od. 31.
[m] Lib. I. Od. 1.

have

have ſaid ſo little of this Art, if it had flouriſh'd as much in their Time, as it does in ours. As, therefore, we are much inferior to them in Lyric Poetry, ſo in its Siſter Science we far exceed them. We have not their *Horaces*; nor had they thoſe maſterly Hands which are now, or lately have been the Admiration of all *Europe*; none to be compar'd with our *Britiſh Orpheus*[n], or his worthy Succeſſor[o], that receives, on this Day, Academical Honours.

The proper Subjects for *Odes*, are almoſt all comprehended in the following Lines of *Horace:*

[p] *Muſa dedit fidibus divos, puerosque deorum,*
Et pugilem victorem, & equum certamine primum,
Et juvenum curas, & libera vina referre.

Gods, Heroes, Conquerors, *Olympic* Crowns,
Love's pleaſing Cares, and the free Joys of Wine,
Are proper Subjects for the Lyric Song. *Roſcom.*

Heroes and Triumphs, we before obſerv'd to be the principal Subjects; and *Horace*, accordingly, places them firſt. But, in Courſe of Time, Love and Entertainments were likewiſe thought very ſuitable ones. *Horace* has left us ſeveral of both Sorts, writ with a Sweetneſs and Elegance that always diſtinguiſh him: Nay, he more than once inſinuates, that light Subjects come peculiarly within his Province, and that he ſtands in need of Apology when he preſumes to meddle with greater:

[q] *Nos convivia, nos prælia virginum,* &c.
Of Treats we ſing, and Love Intrigues.

And after a Recital of *Juno*'s Speech to the Gods, he concludes:

[n] *Henry Purcell.* [o] Dr. *Croſt.* [p] Art. Poet. ℣ 83. [q] Lib. I. Od. 6.

Non

[r] *Non hæc jocoſæ conveniunt lyræ;*
Quo, Muſa, tendis?
Stay, Muſe; this ſuits but ill the ſportive Lyre.

But theſe Expreſſions are the Effects of the Poet's Modeſty, not to be underſtood critically; not as ſpoken of Lyrics in general, but of his own, which with a becoming Decency, he ſays, are unequal to greater Subjects. For the Ode in its own Nature is *chiefly* adapted to the Sublime; and nothing can have more of that Quality than ſome of *Horace*'s. Who, for Inſtance, can read, without Rapture,

[s] *Motum ex Metello Conſule civicum*, &c.

Jam nunc minaci murmure cornuum
Perſtringis aures; jam litui ſtrepunt;
Jam fulgor armorum fugaces
Terret equos, equitumque vultus.
Audire magnos jam videor duces
Non indecoro pulvere ſordidos;
Et cuncta terrarum ſubacta,
Præter atrocem animum Catonis.

Methinks I hear the horrid Din of Arms:
Bright gleaming Armour paints the Field:
The rattling Trumpet pours its dread Alarms:
The Brave lie low in Duſt, the Valiant yield:
Revenge and Honour the ſtern Warrior warms,
And ev'ry Breaſt, but *Cato*'s, is with Horror fill'd.
Oldſworth.

Or this:

[t] *Deſcende Cœlo, & dic, age, tibia,*
Regina, longum, Calliope, melos, &c.

And to mention one more:

[r] Lib. III. Od. 3. [s] Lib. II. Od. 1.
[t] Lib. III. Od. 4.

Qualem

[v] *Qualem miniſtrum fulminis alitem*, &c.

And many others I might produce, from the ſame Poet, of equal Sublimity.

But in the Verſes abovemention'd he has omitted one Subject very ſuitable to the Ode, and which he himſelf has often happily attempted; that, I mean, which relates to moral Reflections; which not only affords the greateſt Advantage to the Reader, but, for aught I know, the greateſt Elegance to the Writer. Many of his Odes are full of it:

[w] *Æquam memento rebus in arduis*
Servare mentem, &c.

Be calm, my Friend, be eaſy, and ſedate,
And bend your Soul to ev'ry State. *Oldſworth.*

[x] *Cedes coemptis ſaltibus, & domo,*
Villaque flavus quam Tiberis lavit
Cedes, & extructis in altum
Divitiis potietur hæres.

You muſt your Fields and pleaſant Seat forego,
Where *Tiber*'s yellow Waters flow;
You muſt to *Pluto*'s gloomy Realm repair,
And leave your Heaps of Wealth to a luxurious Heir. *Oldſworth.*

Again:

[y] *Eheu! fugaces, Poſthume, Poſthume,*
Labuntur anni, &c.

And, to omit innumerable other Inſtances of this Nature, I will add only his Ode on Avarice:

[z] *Creſcit indulgens ſibi dirus hydrops,*
Nec ſitim pellit, niſi cauſa morbi

[v] Lib. IV. Od. 4. [w] Lib. II. Od. 3.
[x] Ibid. [y] Od. 14. [z] Od. 2.

Fugerit

Fugerit venis, & aquoſus albo
Corpore languor.

'Tis great this Paſſion to controul,
For 'tis the Dropſy of the Soul:
Unleſs you purge each ſickly Vein,
'Twill thirſt, and drink, and thirſt again. *Oldſw.*

Theſe moral Odes are often interſpers'd with Encomiums on a Country Life, on moderate Circumſtances, and the like; which always afford Matter for entertaining Deſcriptions:

[a] *Vivitur parvo bene, cui paternum*
Splendet in menſa tenui ſalinum;
Nec leves ſomnos timor, aut cupido
Sordidus, aufert.

Bleſt he with little, on whoſe thrifty Board
That Salt ſtill ſhines, that call'd his Father Lord;
No vexing Fears his Breaſt can ſeize,
No ſordid Luſt will break his Eaſe. *Creech.*

Upon the whole, then, we ſee, that the Ode may be either Sublime, or of the lower Strain; jocoſe or ſerious; mournful or exulting; even ſatirical ſometimes, epigrammatical never. It may conſiſt of Wit, but not of that Turn which is the peculiar Characteriſtic of Epigram. They that have a Mind to know the various Claſſes of Odes, with their uncouth Titles, into which they are by ſome Writers diſtinguiſh'd; may conſult *Voſſius*, *Scaliger*, and others. This to me is an Enquiry not more ſuperfluous than diſagreeable; ſince any Thing, we find, may be the Subject of them, if they are but dreſs'd up in their own peculiar Manner.

From whence the Pleaſure ariſes with which this Kind of Poetry affects us, may be known from

[a] Lib. II. Od. 16.

what

what we have before diſcours'd of the Pleaſure of Poetry in general, when we examin'd how it addreſs'd itſelf to the Paſſions, the common Principles of human Nature, and human Happineſs. I would only now obſerve, that what we ſaid of Poetry in general, is applicable to the Lyric more particularly: Beſides the Advantages of a florid and figurative Style, it commands that Sweetneſs and Variety of Numbers; that Diverſity of Thought; that Elegance of Conciſeneſs; that Energy of Expreſſion; that Quickneſs of Tranſition, and Liberty of Excurſion; that lively Ardour, and noble Sublimity, which can never fail to raiſe in the Soul all thoſe agreeable Senſations, we before deſcrib'd.

It is not my Deſign to give an hiſtorical Account of the ancient Writers in this Kind of Poetry: *Voſſius* reckons up ſeveral among the *Greeks* of both Sexes; we have nothing but Fragments of all of them remaining, except the Poems of *Pindar* and *Anacreon*. The former I have already ſpoke of; thoſe of the latter are ſo few, and the peculiar Nature of them ſo well known, that tho' they deſerve much Praiſe, they need no farther Explication. Among the *Romans*, we have none of any Note, except *Horace*; but he, alone, indeed, is equal to many; and we may venture to affirm, that his Odes exceed any Collection of Poems the learned World has yet been bleſs'd with.

To come now to later Times; it muſt be own'd, the Moderns are excell'd by the Ancients in no Kind of Writing more than this; they ſucceed beſt, when they make uſe of their Language; for many of the Moderns are very good Maſters of it. *Caſimire* is often very happy this Way; but often harſh, turgid, and pompouſly empty; of which the preſent Solemnity reminds me of one Inſtance. The Poet is

ſpeaking

ſpeaking in Praiſe of a Peace lately made; and after he had begun well enough,

[b] *Jam minæ ſævi cecidere belli,*
Jam prophanatis male pulſa terris
Et ſalus, & pax.

he goes on thus,

——— *niveis reviſit*
Oppida bigis.

Then comes, a little after:

[c] *Grandinat gemmis, riguoque cælum*
Depluit auro.

The Verſes are ſmooth and ſonorous; only they have the Misfortune to want common Senſe. But in another Ode he is much happier, unleſs, perhaps, a little too bold:

[d] *Vive, jucundæ metuens juventæ,*
Criſpe Lævini; fugiunt avaræ
Menſium lunæ, nimiumque volvi
Lubricus Æther.

But the Lines that follow, a little after, are perfectly juſt, and beautiful:

Quod tibi larga dedit hora dextra,
Hora furaci rapuit ſiniſtra;
More fallentis tenerum jocoſæ
Matris alumnum.

Our Countryman *Hannes* needed only to have writ more to have made himſelf ſecond to *Horace* in all future Ages. But the Odes that are writ in the modern Languages, in *French*, *Italian*, and *Engliſh*, have nothing of the Genius of the Ancients. Ours, which generally go under the Name of *Pindarics*,

[b] Caſimir. Lib. I. Od. 1. [c] Ibid. [d] Od. 5.

are

are ſuch empty, trifling Performances, that they are below even the Cenſure of a Critic. A Heap of Verſes, tho' never ſo inſipid and ridiculous, form'd as little upon the Laws of Reaſon, as of Metre, a monſtrous Product of the Brain, ſhall be call'd, forſooth, a *Pindaric!* a Scandal which it is to be wiſh'd the Learned would no longer ſuffer to be offer'd to ſo ſacred a Title. Our Songs and Catches, likewiſe, which are daily ſet to Muſic, whatever Charms they may borrow from thence, have very rarely any of their own; nay, it is obſervable, that often the worſt Verſes are ſet to Muſic beſt; as if true Poetry, and good Muſic, Siſters as they are, cou'd never agree: Which is a Reproach that redounds no leſs to the Diſhonour of Muſic, than the former, I juſt mention'd, was to *Pindar*. But better Times appear, in which we hope to ſee theſe, and all other Arts, improv'd to their utmoſt Perfection; in this happy Age, I mean, wherein (that I may conclude my Diſcourſe as I began, with a View at once to our preſent Solemnity, and our preſent Subject)

[e] *Jam Fides, & Pax, & Honor, Pudorque*
Priſcus, & neglecta redire Virtus
Audet, apparetque beata pleno
Copia cornu.

Now *Honour*, *Chaſtity*, and *Peace*,
Virtue, and baniſh'd *Faith*, return;
Now Plenty broods a fair Increaſe,
And fills with Flow'rs her fragrant Horn. *Old.*

[e] Hor. Carmen Seculare.

LECTURE XVII, XVIII.

Of SATIRE.

IT is Merit enough for a Writer on a Subject that has been often canvaſs'd, if he can reduce into a ſhort Compaſs whatever hath been ſaid before, and add ſomething material of his own. Whether I have done this in the preſent Caſe, muſt be ſubmitted to the Judgment of the Audience; I am ſure I ſhall make it my Endeavour, not only to repreſent my own Sentiments in an advantageous Light, but thoſe of others; for I have a large Field of Writers before me, on this Subject; not only *Horace*, *Quintilian*, and the reſt of the Ancients, but the learned *Caſaubon*, *Scaliger*, *Voſſius*, *Dacier*, and ſome others.

A Difficulty occurs upon our firſt Entrance; for a Doubt has been made about the Name of *Satire*, and the Orthography of it: The Reaſon of which Doubt will appear, from the uncertain Hiſtory we have of this Kind of Poem. It cannot be denied, but that the *Grecian* Satire differ'd from the *Roman*; but yet the Difference ſeems not ſo great, as ſome are apt to imagine: The former was of the dramatic Kind, a Sort of Interlude annex'd to Tragedy, to remove from the Audience too melancholy Impreſſions. It is *Horace*'s Obſervation,

Carmine

[f] *Carmine qui Tragico vilem certavit ob hircum,*
Mox etiam agreſtes Satiros nudavit, & aſper
Incolumi gravitate jocum tentavit; eo quod
Illecebris erat, & grata novitate, morandus
Spectator.

The firſt Tragedians found that ſerious Style
Too grave for their unculcivated Age,
And ſo brought wild and naked Satires in,
(Whoſe Motion, Words, and Shape, were all a Farce)
As oft as Decency wou'd give them Leave;
Becauſe the mad ungovernable Rout,
Full of Confuſion, and the Fumes of Wine,
Lov'd ſuch Variety, and Antic Tricks. *Roſcom*

The *Scene* was laid in the Country, the *Perſons* Satyrs, and rural Deities. Sometimes Peaſants and Ruſtics were mix'd with them. The Subject was jocoſe, and full of Sneer and Banter; the Style a Medium between Comedy and Tragedy. This, as I ſaid, was the ſatirical Poetry of the *Grecians*; but Satire, as we now have it, is entirely *Roman*, if we may believe *Quintilian*, who ſays[g], *Satira quidem tota noſtra eſt*; or *Horace*[h], who ſtyles *Ennius* the *Inventor of a Poem unknown to the* Grecians, meaning *Satire*, according to the Opinion of moſt of his Interpreters. *Scaliger*, however, expreſly denies it to be of *Roman* Original; and there is Reaſon, indeed, as we ſhall ſee hereafter, to underſtand thoſe Expreſſions of *Quintilian* and *Horace* with ſome Abatement. Thoſe that will not allow it to be deriv'd from the *Grecians*, but entirely *Roman*, maintain, that *Satira* ſhould be writ with an *i*, not a *y*; and that it is not deriv'd from *Satyrus*, but *Satur*;

[f] De Art. Poet. ℣ 220.
[g] Inſtit. L. I. c. x.
[h] L. I. Sat. X. 66.

Satira, therefore, is the ſame as *Satura*, as *Maximus* anciently *Maxumus*. Now *Satur* ſignifies *full* of a Mixture of Things, as *Lanx Satura*, a Diſh full of Varieties; and, as *Dacier* obſerves[i], "thoſe "Laws were call'd *Leges Saturæ* *, which contain'd "ſeveral Heads and Titles under them; as the *Ju-* "*lian-Papian-Poppæan* Law, which was otherwiſe "call'd the *Miſcella*, which is but another Word "for *Satura*. Hence that Expreſſion, *per Saturam* "*legem ferre*, when the Votes of the Senators were "not taken in Order, or counted, but were given "together promiſcuouſly. And this is properly "*per Saturam ſententias exquirere*, which is an Ex-"preſſion *Salluſt* makes uſe of after *Lælius*. Nor "is this all; ſome Books anciently bore this Title; "as *Peſcennius Feſtus* left *Hiſtorias Saturas*, or "*per Saturam*." Thus far *Dacier*. *Satire*, then, when applied by a Metaphor to Writing, is a Miſcellaneous Poem, full of Variety of Matter: According to that of *Juvenal*,

[k] *Quicquid agunt homines, votum, timor, ira, voluptas,*
Gaudia, diſcurſus, noſtri eſt farrago libelli.

[i] Præfat. in Horatii Satiras, De Orig. & Progreſſu Satiræ Romanæ.

* Monſ. *Dacier*, who borrow'd the Obſervation from *Iſ. Caſaubon*, ſhould have mention'd ſome Authority for this Expreſſion of *Leges Saturæ*; becauſe *Voſſius*, who allows the like Uſe of the Word, yet queſtions the Grammarians in this Inſtance. *Feſtus* cites, *Imperium, quod Plebes per ſaturam dederat, id abrogatum eſt.* Again, *Dein poſtero die, quaſi per ſaturam ſententiis exquiſitis, in deditionem accipitur*, "ubi *per ſaturam* valet collectim ac "raptim. At non video, ſays *Voſſius*, ut hinc colligi "poſſit, fuiſſe Romanis legem ullam, quæ *ſatura* dice-"retur."

[k] Sat. I. 85.

Whatever

Whatever ſince that golden Age was done,
What Human Kind deſires, and what they ſhun,
Rage, Paſſions, Pleaſures, Impotence of Will,
Shall this ſatirical Collection fill. *Dryden.*

But however various the Matter of it is, it ought always to have ſomewhat of Keenneſs and Invective, to expoſe the Vices and Follies of Mankind with Raillery, or chaſtiſe them with Severity. Before Plays were brought to *Rome*, the *Saturnine* and *Feſcennine* Verſes were much in Vogue: They were a Sort of rude and unpoliſh'd Compoſitions, at beſt, full of Contumely, and often of Ribaldry. Whence *Horace*,

[1] *Feſcennina per hunc inventa licentia morem*
Verſibus alternis opprobria ruſtica fudit.

Hence grew the Liberty of the looſer Muſe,
Hence they grew ſcurrilous, and wou'd abuſe.
Creech.

Afterwards, as the *Romans* grew more polite, theſe kind of Verſes refin'd in Proportion: But they retain'd, ſtill, their Jibes and Banter, and kept ſo far to their firſt Inſtitution, as to make the Follies of human Life the Object of their Ridicule. From hence proceeded *Satire*, ſo call'd from the *Farrago* and Variety of Matter it contain'd. It was improv'd, likewiſe, with Muſic and Dancing, which, conſidering its being carried on in Dialogue, made it reſemble ſomewhat of the dramatic Kind; nor had the *Romans* any Thing, yet, that came ſo near the Drama as this did. Afterwards, when they had receiv'd both Tragedy and Comedy from the *Grecians*, they were ſo taken with the Novelty, that Satire, for ſome Time, lay neglected. But coming

[1] Lib. II. Epiſt. I. ℣ 155.

again into Eſteem, it was added, as a Kind of *Exodium*, to Comedy. Thus Things went on for ſome Years, till *Ennius* aroſe, endu'd with Wit, and true poetic Fire, who obſerving how fond the People were of ſeeing the Vices of Mankind expos'd upon the Stage, thought a Poem on the ſame Subject, without the Decoration of Scenes and Action, might have the ſame Effect. Accordingly, he attempted Satires in the ſame Form we now ſee them, only he did not confine himſelf to the Hexameter, but made uſe of all Sorts of Meaſure. The Remains we have of this Poet, are noble Indications of the Strength of his Genius; and *Horace* and *Virgil* have ſhewn what Opinion they had of his Writings, by borrowing ſo much from them. After *Ennius*, ſucceeded *Pacuvius*; but his Works are all loſt, excepting ſome Fragments, and thoſe of uncertain Authority. Next came *Lucilius*, of whom, likewiſe, we have only ſome Fragments remaining. But his Excellencies and Imperfections are very amply ſet forth by *Horace*, whoſe Words I have no Occaſion to cite here. I would obſerve, however, that thoſe Lines,

[m] —— *Quid, cum eſt Lucilius auſus*
Primus in hunc operis componere carmina morem?
How, Sir, *Lucilius*, that did firſt engage
In writing Satires, and that laſh'd the Age.
Creech.

are not ſo to be underſtood, as if he was the firſt that attempted Satire; which both *Ennius* and *Pacuvius*, as we juſt now obſerv'd, had done before him: But that *Lucilius* improv'd it ſo far as to give it that new Face, under which it appear'd in *Horace*'s Time: For that his Satires were of the ſame Form with *Horace*'s, is maintain'd by Monſieur *Dacier* againſt

[m] Lib. I. Sat. II. ℣ 62.
Caſaubon.

*Caſaubon**. It muſt be allow'd, however, that one Species of Satire owes its Perfection to *Horace*, as another does to *Juvenal*; both which we ſhall hereafter ſpeak of ſeparately. A third Kind was the *Varronian* or *Menippean* Satire, ſo call'd from *Menippus*, a Cynic Philoſopher, among the *Grecians*, whoſe Doctrine *Varro* follow'd. It was a Sort of Medley, conſiſting not only of all Kinds of Verſe, but of Verſe and Proſe mix'd together; a Specimen of which we have in *Petronius*'s *Satyricon*†. We have none of *Varro*'s poetical Works remaining, except ſome ſmall Fragments; which is the more to be lamented, conſidering the Character *Quintilian* gives of him, That he was the moſt learned of all the *Romans*.

The Word *Satire* was anciently taken in a leſs reſtrain'd Senſe than it is at preſent, not only as denoting a ſevere Poem againſt Vice, but as conſiſting of Precepts of Virtue, and the Praiſes of it: And even in the Satires, as they are call'd, of *Horace*, *Juvenal*, and *Perſius*, &c. which are principally le-

* *Caſaubon* expreſly ſays, that *Horace* imitated *Lucilius*; his Point was not to prove that *Lucilius*'s Satires were of a different Kind from *Horace*'s, but from *Ennius*'s. Monſ. *Dacier*, on the contrary, maintains, that the Satires of *Horace*, *Lucilius*, and *Ennius*, were all of the ſame Species. And yet, I think, very hardly reconciles his Opinion with Antiquity. He produces *Quintilian*: *Alterum illud & prius Satiræ* GENUS, *quod non ſolum Carminum varietate miſtum condidit Terentius Varro. Quintilian*, ſays he, did not ſuppoſe that *Varro* liv'd before *Lucilius*: What then? why he imitated *Ennius*'s Satire, which was *alterum* & *prius* GENUS, a different and prior *Kind* to that of *Lucilius*.

† *Lucilius* made uſe, in the ſame Poem, of different Sort of Verſes: *Ennius* of different Sort of Verſes, but not in the ſame Poem: *Varro*, of Proſe and Verſe together: *Horace* kept to one Metre throughout his Satires.

vell'd against the Weakness, the Follies, or Vices of Mankind; we find many Directions, as well as Incitements to Virtue. Such Strokes of Morality, *Horace*, particularly, is full of; and in *Juvenal* they occur very frequently. Thus,

[a] *Permittas ipsis expendere numinibus, quid*
Conveniat nobis, rebusque sit utile nostris:
Charior est illis homo, quam sibi.

Intrust thy Fortune to the Pow'rs above,
Leave them to manage for thee, and to grant
What their unerring Wisdom sees thee want:
In Goodness, as in Greatness, they excel;
Ah! that we lov'd ourselves but half as well.
Dryden.

And afterwards:

[o] *Monstro, quod ipse tibi possis dare; semita certe*
Tranquillæ per virtutem patet unica vitæ.

The Path to Peace is Virtue: What I show,
Thyself may freely on thyself bestow. *Dryden.*

All of them sometimes correct Vice, like Moralists, I may say, like Divines, rather than Satirists: What less can we say of this of *Persius*?

[p] *O curvæ in terras animæ, & cœlestium inanes!*

O Souls, in whom no heav'nly Fire is found.
Dryden.

Sentiments, these, one would think, were fetch'd from true Religion, not from unassisted Reason; and which we might expect from the *Christian*, more than the *Stoic*.

Notwithstanding the learned Arguments which *Casaubon*, *Dacier*, and others have urg'd, for the

[a] Sat. X. 347. [o] ỳ 363. [p] Sat. II. 61.

Ety

Etymology of the Word Satire, I can't but think their Opinion has more Probability in it than Truth; nor can any ſufficient Reaſon be aſſign'd, why it may not be as well deriv'd from *Satyrus*, a Satyr, as from *Satur*, full. There's certainly too much Reaſon to think that ſome Things in *Horace*, *Juvenal*, and *Perſius*, were borrow'd from the ſuppos'd Manners and Cuſtoms of Satyrs; and I cannot but lament, that Writers ſo deſerving in all other Reſpects, ſhould reprove ſome Vices in ſuch a Manner, as to teach them; and that while they are recommending Virtue, they ſhould throw in ſome Expreſſions ſo injurious to it. This Controverſy, then, about the *Name* of *Satire*, (which, it muſt be own'd, is the more material, becauſe it in a great Meaſure defines its *Nature*) I ſhall leave in Uncertainty, with *Voſſius*, rather than determine upon it poſitively with *Dacier*.

For I cannot but be ſurpriz'd to ſee this laſt Author ſo confidently aſſert*, "That *Satire* is a Spe- "cies of Poetry unknown to any but the *Romans*, "and has no Relation to the ſatirical Compoſitions "of the *Grecians*, as ſome learned Men, by Miſtake, "have thought[q]." Now, I'll be bold to ſay, that not only *ſome*, but *moſt*, if not all the Learned, have thought ſo, and ſtill think the ſame; and even Monſ. *Dacier* himſelf, I reckon among the Number, how much ſoever he ſeems here to have forgot himſelf. I appeal not only to what I have before ſaid upon this Subject myſelf, but to what I have cited from him, whether it does not appear that the *Roman Satire* had ſome *Affinity* with the *Grecian*, and, particu-

* He ſays no more than *Quintilian*, l. x. as cited before, *Satira quidem tota noſtra eſt*; and even *Horace*, *Græcis intactum Carmen*.

[q] De Orig. & Progr. Satiræ Rom.

larly, that it ow'd its Riſe to it. [r] *Voſſius*, ſpeaking of the *Grecian*, tells us, "That the Diſcourſe was "agreeable to the Characters of the Speakers; full "of Ribaldry, Ridicule, and Scurrility. The Fail-"ings of Men were the Objects of their Scoffs, "and to excite Laughter the Aim of them. *Horace*, "in his Art of Poetry,

"[s] *Verum ita riſores, ita commendare dicaces*
"*Conveniet Satyros, ita vertere ſeria ludo.*

Yet Satires ſhou'd obſerve this decent Rule,
And ſo turn ſerious Things to Ridicule,
As, *&c.* *Creech.*

Now will any one ſay, the *Grecian* and *Roman* Satire had nothing of this in common between them? Are Laſciviouſneſs, Ridicule, and Banter, the expoſing Vice, and the exciting Laughter, Properties in which the *Roman* Satire had no Share? We readily grant, indeed, that as it appear'd in a *different Form*, it was not the very *ſame Kind* of Poem with the *Grecian:* But ſurely there was ſome, nay, a great deal of Affinity between them; and the one, particularly, owes its Riſe to the other.

Eighteenth Lecture.

Thus much for the Etymology, the Hiſtory of the Riſe and Progreſs of Satire. With Reſpect to the Nature and different Species of it, I can by no means ſubſcribe to *Voſſius*'s Opinion, who obſerves[t], "That, as the "Vices of Mankind may be corrected either pub-"lickly, or in private, the latter Method is much "the more ſuitable to Satire: And that *Juvenal* and "*Perſius*, ſetting aſide the Metre, have deviated "more from the true Nature of it, than *Lucian* in "his Dialogues, or *Julian* in his *Cæſars*. For the

[r] Hiſt. Poet. L. II. c. ix. p. 41. [t] ℣ 225.
[s] Inſtit. Poet. Lib. III. c. 9, 41.

"former

" former ſhew their ill Nature more than their Wit, " and don't ſo much put Vice out of Countenance, " as themſelves out of Temper; whereas the latter " always keep up their Humour, and mix their Re- " proof with Facetiouſneſs*." According to this, the *Horatian* Satire is the only true one; and the Writings of *Juvenal* and *Perſius* have no Pretence to that Title. But the truer State of the Caſe is this: Satire in *general*, is a Poem deſign'd to reprove the Vices and Follies of Mankind: It is twofold; either the *jocoſe*, as that of *Horace*; or the *ſerious*, like that of *Juvenal*. The former hidden, the latter open. That generally makes Sport with Vice, and expoſes it to Ridicule: This probes it to the Bottom, and puts it to Torture: And ſo far is it from not deſerving the Title of Satire, that, in my Opinion, it is the more noble Species of it; and the genteel Jokes of *Horace*, how ingenious ſoever, are leſs affecting than the poetic Rage, and commendable Zeal of *Juvenal*. I ſhall ſpeak to both Kinds, as *Perſius* has well diſtinguiſh'd them, where he deſcribes the Difference between *Lucilius* and *Horace*'s Way of Writing:

[y] —— *Secuit Lucilius urbem*
Te Lupe, te Muti, & genuinum fregit in illis.
Omne vafer vitium ridenti Flaccus amico
Tangit, & admiſſus circum præcordia ludit,
Callidus excuſſo populum ſuſpendere naſo.

* *Voſſius*'s Opinion ſeems to be the Reſult of his Enquiry into the Original of Satire, which he obſerves to have aroſe out of the old Comedy. From whence he maintains, that the chearful bantering Humour ſhould be ſtill kept up, and not be forfeited for Moroſeneſs: And for the ſame Reaſon, the Style ſhould be near allied to Proſe. In both which Particulars, and indeed in all the others which he mentions, he ſets *Horace* for an Example.

[y] Sat. I. ℣ 114.

Yet old *Lucilius* never fear'd the Times,
But laſh'd the City, and diſſected Crimes.
Mutius and *Lupus* both by Name he brought;
He mouth'd 'em, and betwixt his Grinders caught.
Unlike in Method with conceal'd Deſign,
Did crafty *Horace* his low Numbers join;
And, with a ſly inſinuating Grace,
Laugh'd at his Friend, and look'd him in the Face:
Wou'd raiſe a Bluſh, where ſecret Vice he found;
And tickle, while he gently prob'd the Wound.
With ſeeming Innocence the Crowd beguil'd;
But made the deſp'rate Paſſes when he ſmil'd.
Dryden.

Voſſius ſtill erring upon the ſame String, ſays, "It is "not ſo much the Buſineſs of Satire to reprove all "Sorts of Vice, as thoſe that are the proper Sub-"jects of Laughter[w]." If this Maxim is true, *Juvenal* will ſcarce find a Place among the Satiriſts: For tho' he may ſometimes laugh, he is, for the Generality, ſerious; and ſhews the Laſh much more than his Teeth. Nay, his Smiles are very different from thoſe of *Horace*; they are not the genteel ones of a Courtier, but mix'd with Gall and ill Nature; ſuch as *Virgil* deſcribes:

Ad quem ſubridens miſta Mezentius ira.
To whom *Mezentius* with malignant Smile.

The Argument which *Voſſius* cites for his Opinion, makes againſt it, rather than for it. He urges[x], "that thoſe Vices are the proper Subjects of Satire, "that were ſo of the ancient Comedy: Hence "*Horace*;

[y] "*Si quis dignus erat deſcribi, quod malus, aut fur,*

[w] P. 40. [x] Ibid. [y] Lib. I. Sat. IV.

Aut

" *Aut mœchus foret, aut ſicarius, aut alioqui*
" *Famoſus, multa cum libertate notabant.*

If they were to deſcribe a vile, unjuſt,
And cheating Knave, or ſcourge a lawleſs Luſt,
Or other Crimes; regardleſs of his Fame,
They ſhew'd the Man, and boldly told his Name.
Creech.

I ask, then, are Thieves, Whoremaſters, and Robbers, guilty of thoſe leſs Crimes which are only to be expos'd to Ridicule?

But the ſame learned Writer goes on: " The " Diction of Satire, ſays he[z], ought to reſemble " Proſe rather than Poetry, and appear with as " much Eaſe as if it flow'd *Extempore*. *Juvenal* " has had little Regard to this Rule, whoſe Style is " Epic[a]; and *Perſius* ſtill leſs, who is ſwelling, and " lofty. Whereas nothing is ſo great an Orna- " ment to Satire, as an Appearance of Truth and " Simplicity, with which bold Metaphors are very " inconſiſtent." Here he takes for granted that there is only one Kind of Satire, ſuch as *Horace* writ; which is begging a Queſtion, that can by no means be granted him. All he ſays may be very true, in reſpect to that one Kind, but not at all applicable to the reſt; and to blame *Juvenal* for not writing in the familiar Style, is the ſame Abſurdity, as if he ſhould arbitrarily lay it down as an univerſal Rule, that every Dramatic Piece ought to be writ ſo too; and then very gravely tell us, *That* Sophocles *has had little Regard to this Maxim.* For, to ſay the Truth, there is ſcarce leſs Difference between the two Kinds of Satire, than there is between Comedy and Tragedy. But I cannot conceive what poſſeſs'd this Writer, when, to prove his Poſition, that Satire

[z] P. 43. [a] P. 44.

ought

ought to be writ in the low Style, he urges this of *Horace*[b]:

" *Non ego inornata, & dominantia nomina* SOLUM,
" *Verbaque, Piſones, ſatyrorum ſcriptor amabo.*
You muſt not think that a ſatiric Style
Allows of ſcandalous and brutiſh Words. *Roſcom.*

" Here, ſays he, it is evident, that the Character of " a Satiriſt is not to affect Ornament, but Strength " and Propriety." Now, not to obſerve that *Horace* is not ſpeaking of the Satire of his own Time, but of the ſatirical Drama that was us'd as an Interlude in Tragedy; to paſs by, I ſay, the Occaſion of the Words, the Senſe of them is ſo far from favouring the Opinion they are brought for, that they directly overthrow it: He ſays, that in this Kind of Writing he does not chuſe ONLY Words of common Uſe, proving therefore that Satire may be writ in a ſublimer Style. *Voſſius*, I ſuppoſe, here took *non* for *nihilo**.

In the ſame Diſcourſe he obſerves[c], " That it is " the Buſineſs of the Satiriſt not ſo much to correct " the Manners of paſt Times, as of the preſent. " *Perſius*, ſays he, often tranſgreſſes this Rule; for " he taxes few of his own Age, and thoſe only under " general Names; ſuch as *Titius*, or *Mævius*. His " Poems, therefore, ſcarce deſerve to be call'd Sa- " tires, becauſe they affect no one particularly. And " *Juvenal* ſometimes deviates from this indubitable

[b] Ibid.

* I don't ſee how *nihilo inornata* would make more for *Voſſius*'s Senſe. But do not *Horace*'s Words imply, that a Writer of Satires ſhould CHIEFLY uſe common Words, tho' he allows he is not always oblig'd to uſe no other? A common Style is the general Rule, tho' there may be ſome Exceptions to it.

[c] P. 40, 41.

" Rule."

" Rule." I cannot help making a few Remarks on theſe Aſſertions, which will not a little ſerve to illuſtrate the Subject before us. In the firſt Place, I can't ſee why it is the Buſineſs of a Satiriſt to correct Mankind in Individuals, rather than in general. He may chuſe, indeed, either Way, and it is hard to ſay which is more peculiarly his Province. But if any Difference is to be made, I ſhould take the Side againſt *Voſſius*, and avoid reproving Particulars. It is undoubtedly fairer to aim our Shafts againſt the Vice, rather than the Man. The latter, indeed, is ſometimes juſtifiable, againſt ſome notorious Monſters, that deſerve to be the Butts of Mankind: But even here the Poet does not point them out by their real Names, but under fictitious Characters; which is another Particular I have been oblig'd to obſerve againſt the foremention'd Author; who, for what Reaſon I know not, makes it eſſential to Satire to characterize by Name; a Property which I ſhould much rather leave to the Libeller, than the Poet. *Horace* and *Juvenal*, it is true, ſometimes aſſume this Liberty; but, for the Generality, 'tis Vice they reprove in the Abſtract; and when they ſeem to mention Names, it is to be obſerv'd, that we, at this Diſtance of Time, know not whether they are real or borrow'd ones. The other Obſervation of *Voſſius's*, *That it is the Buſineſs of a Satiriſt not ſo much to correct the Manners of paſt Times, as of the preſent*, I readily aſſent to; and is ſo evident a Propoſition, that it is needleſs to aſſert it. The Living, not the Dead, are capable of Amendment; the latter are accidentally only, brought upon the Stage, that the former, through their Sides, may receive the more advantageous Wound. To this End, we often ſee *Juvenal*'s Example follow'd:

——*Experiar*,

[d] —— *Experiar, quid concedatur in illos,*
Quorum Flaminia tegitur cinis, atque Latina.
Since none the Living-Villains dare implead,
Arraign them in the Perſons of the Dead. *Dryden.*

Which, by the Way, is a Confirmation of what we before alledg'd againſt *Voſſius*'s Opinion, *viz.* That, in *Juvenal*'s at leaſt, the Living ought to be noted in Satire under their real Names. But it is Time we ſhould now return to the two different Species of it which I before mention'd.

They both agree in being pungent and cutting; yet are diſtinguiſh'd by very evident Marks: The one is pleaſant and facetious; the other angry and auſtere: The one ſmiles; the other ſtorms: The Foibles of Mankind are the Object of the one; greater Crimes, of the other: The former is always in the low Style; the latter generally in the Sublime: That abounds with Wit only; this adds to the Salt Bitterneſs and Acrimony. *Horace*'s Satires are of ſo fine and delicate a Turn, as may much eaſier be conceiv'd, than expreſs'd: They are rightly term'd *Diſcourſes*, for ſome of them are ſcarce reducible under either Species of Satire. *Juvenal*'s are all true Satires, except the fifteenth, which is of uncertain Authority. So far is *Voſſius* from being in the right, when he makes *Horace* almoſt the only Satiriſt, and ſcarce admits *Juvenal* to the Title of one.

It is not very clear, then, why *Horace* ſhould ſay of himſelf,

[e] *Sunt quibus in Satira videar nimis acer.*
Some fancy I am bitter when I jeer,
Beyond the Rules of Satire too ſevere. *Creech.*

or who they were that thought ſo. I cannot, indeed,

[d] Sat. I. ad finem. [e] Lib. II. Sat. I. ℣ 1.

come

come into the Opinion of others whom he mentions:

[f] —— *Sine nervis altera, quicquid*
Compoſui, pars eſſe putat, ſimileſque meorum
Mille die verſus deduci poſſe.
Some, that my Verſe is dull, and flat; and ſay
A Man may write a Thouſand ſuch a Day. *Creech.*

But ſurely too much Warmth was never his Fault; he ought ſometimes, perhaps, to be condemn'd for the Want of it.

Either Kind of Satire may be writ in the Dialogue or Epiſtolary Manner, and we have Inſtances of both Forms in *Horace*, *Juvenal*, and *Perſius*. As ſome of *Horace's*, which are call'd Satires, are as truly Epiſtles; ſo many of his Epiſtles might as well be call'd Satires. For Example, [g] *Qui fit, Mecænas*, &c. might, with equal Reaſon, be reckon'd among the Epiſtles; and [h] *Prima dicte mihi*, &c. among the Diſcourſes or Satires, if the Author or Editor had ſo thought fit.

The diſtinguiſhing Nature of *Juvenal* cannot be better known, than from the very Beginning of his Satires:

[i] *Semper ego auditor tantum? nunquamne reponam,*
Vexatus toties rauci Theſeide Codri? &c.
Still ſhall I hear, and never quit the Score,
Stunn'd with hoarſe *Codrus Theſeid*, o'er and o'er.
Dryden.

At the firſt Onſet, he declares open War, and gives ſufficient Intimation of the Strength of his Spirit, and what the Reader may expect from it. He firſt ſharpens his Style againſt the ſcribbling Poets of his

[f] ℣ 2. [g] Lib. I. Sat. I. [h] Lib. I. Ep. I.
[i] Sat. I. ℣ 1.

Age;

Age; and when he had, in a ſarcaſtical Manner, mention'd the Reaſons that induced him to *write*,

[k] —— *Stulta eſt clementia, cum tot ubique*
Vatibus occurras, perituræ parcere chartæ.

But ſince the World with Writing is poſſeſt,
I'll verſify in Spite; and do my beſt,
To make as much waſte Paper as the reſt.

Dryden.

He ſallies forth, a few Lines after, into a more extenſive Field of Satire, and with no leſs Wit than Gall, tells us the Reaſons why he choſe this *Kind* of *Writing:*

[l] *Cur tamen hoc potius libeat decurrere campo,*
Per quem magnus equos Auruncæ flexit Alumnus,
Si vacat, & placidi rationem admittitis, edam.
Cum tener uxorem ducat ſpado, Mævia Tuſcum
Figat aprum, & nuda teneat venabula mamma;
Patricios omnes opibus cum provocet unus,
Quo tondente gravis juveni mihi barba ſonabat;
Cum pars Niliacæ plebis, cum verna Canopi,
Criſpinus, Tyrias humero revocante lacernas,
Ventilet æſtivum digitis ſudantibus aurum,
Nec ſufferre queat majoris pondera gemmæ;
Difficile eſt, Satiram non ſcribere: nam quis iniquæ
Tam patiens urbis, tam ferreus, ut tentat ſe?

But why I lift aloft the Satire's Rod,
And tread the Path that fam'd *Lucilius* trod,
Attend the Cauſes which my Muſe have led:
When ſapleſs Eunuchs mount the Marriage-Bed,
When manniſh *Mævia*, that two-handed Whore,
Aſtride an Horſeback hunts the *Tuſcan* Boar;
When all our Lords are by his Wealth out-vy'd,
Whoſe Razor on my callow Beard was try'd;

[k] ℣ 17. [l] ℣ 19.

When

When I behold the Spawn of conquer'd *Nile*,
Criſpinus both in Birth and Manners vile,
Pacing in Pomp with Cloak of *Tyrian* Dye,
Chang'd oft a Day for needleſs Luxury;
And finding oft Occaſion to be fann'd,
Ambitious to produce his Lady Hand;
Charg'd with light Summer Rings, his Fingers ſweat,
Unable to ſupport a Gem of Weight:
Such fulſome Objects meeting ev'ry where,
'Tis hard to write, and harder to forbear. *Dryden.*

In theſe, and the Lines that follow, he lays down the chief Heads of Satire he deſign'd to treat of; this he does in an elegant and poetical Manner, not by propoſing them in general Terms, but by Particulars. Afterwards, having weigh'd the Reaſons his Friend alledges to diſſuade him from ſo dangerous an Attempt, he replies, with a Quickneſs and Vivacity worthy of a Satiriſt:

[m] *Qui dedit ergo tribus patruis aconita, vehetur*
Penſilibus plumis, atque illinc deſpiciet nos?
Shall they who drench'd three Uncles in a Draught
Of poiſ'nous Juice, be then in Triumph brought?
Dryden.

What a Poignancy in the Words, and how ſwift a Turn in the Thought?

I agree with *Voſſius*, but for a different Reaſon from his, that *Perſius* ſcarce deſerves a Place among the Satiriſts. He has dropp'd, indeed, many fine Expreſſions in deſcribing the Beauty of Virtue, and the Deformity of Vice: But he wants Poignancy and Sting; he never laughs, and ſtrikes but ſeldom: He does not correct Faults ſo much, as find them; his

[m] *Sat.* 158.

Reproof,

Reproof, at beſt, is too mild, and more like the Evenneſs of a *Philoſopher*, than the Severity of a *Satiriſt*.

To come now to our own Times. There are few Kinds of Writing, in which the Moderns, of our own Country eſpecially, are leſs exceeded than in this *; I mean in that Species of it in which *Juvenal* writ: For the *Horatian* Satire is but little affected among us. That Author, particularly [a], who not long ſince attack'd the *Jeſuits*, tho' his Works, either through want of Care, or Judgment, or, more probably, conſidering his Youth, for want of both, are not ſo correct as might have been wiſh'd; yet has ſhewn a true poetical Vein, and a Fire not unworthy *Juvenal* himſelf. No one can be a Stranger to *Dryden*, who, as he exceeds others in every Kind of Poetry, ſo, in this, exceeds himſelf. But to paſs by the reſt of our own Countrymen whom I might mention, that deſervedly celebrated *French* Poet [b] has ſo happily blended *Horace* and *Juvenal* together, that he ſeems to have found out a beautiful Species of Satire between both. He claims the poetical Laurel, but in Satire more particularly, from all the Writers of this Age, by univerſal Conſent; and that is an Authority, to which I ſhall never think fit to oppoſe my private Judgment, whatever it is.

* Modern Satires will always appear with an Advantage, which the Ancients want, *viz.* we are better acquainted with the Characters; which is a Reaſon why they will pleaſe beſt, not of their real Excellence.

[a] *Oldham.* [b] *Boileau.*

LECTURE

LECTURE XIX, &c.

Of the DRAMA *in general.*

WE are come, at laſt, to that Species of *Poetry* which is chiefly and primarily ſo call'd, becauſe it agrees beſt with the Senſe of the original Word, ποιεῖν, whence *Poema* is deriv'd. For ſuch is the comprehenſive Signification of this Word, that it denotes not only the Invention, but the Contexture of the Fable, the Conduct of the Action, and the Diſpoſal of the Parts: All which concern the two Sorts of Poems that now remain to be diſcours'd of, *viz.* the Epic and Dramatic, but more eſpecially the latter. The former, indeed, is, upon the whole, more noble in its Nature; but, in ſome Circumſtances, is inferior to the other; in the Action, particularly, as the Etymology of the Word *Drama*, from δρᾶν, to *act*, implies. In Epic, indeed, Heroes and Gods are repreſented ſpeaking: But the Poet there performs only the Part of an Hiſtorian, and the Speeches are no more than Narrations. Whereas, in the Dramatic Writings, the Perſons themſelves are introduced, every Thing is tranſacted in our Sight, and our Eyes and Ears at once are gratified. Now *Horace*'s Obſervation is undoubtedly juſt:

Segnius

[P] *Segnius irritant animos demiſſa per aurem,*
Quam quæ ſunt oculis commiſſa fidelibus.
But what we hear, moves leſs than what we ſee.
Roſcommon.

Beſides, the Action in the Drama is much more ſimple, and compendious, than in the Epic; it takes up leſs Time, and therefore requires more Art to conduct it. It excites in the Mind more rapid Motions, and conſequently makes the Pleaſure and Admiration more intenſe. For theſe, and other Reaſons, *Ariſtotle*, in the laſt Chapter of his Book of Poetry, does not ſcruple to give the Preference to Tragedy before Epic. Not that I think he reckons it a more noble Kind in *general*, (for that would be contrary to Truth and Reaſon) but only ſo far as its Sphere extends: And this is a Difference, which, I humbly conceive, is very diſtinguiſhable. This Excellence of the Drama, which I here ſpeak of, is the Reaſon, no doubt, why, tho' his Book bears the Title of *Poetry* in general, yet he dwells ſolely upon that Species of it. I am not ignorant, indeed, that this Work of his, as it is now extant, is imperfect, and part of it loſt. But by what we have now remaining, the reſt of it appears to have been ſpent on the ſame Subject. And *Horace*, the beſt Interpreter of *Ariſtotle*, in his famous Epiſtle to the *Piſo's*, keeps chiefly in this Track. The other Kinds of Poetry he does but lightly touch: But the Laws of the Drama he treats of fully and profeſſedly. After his Example, various Writers upon the *Art of Poetry*, in different Ages and Languages, have choſe to dwell chiefly upon the *Drama*, and have left abundance of elaborate Treatiſes upon that Subject. I ſhall make it my Buſineſs to collect what others have

[P] De Art. Poet. ℣ 180.

ſaid,

ſaid, into as ſhort a Compaſs as I can, and explain more fully what I have now to add of my own.

The principal Species of the Drama are two, Comedy and Tragedy: Some others there are, of leſs Note; as Paſtoral, and Satire, both which we have already ſpoke of. Tragi-Comedy I don't reckon one of them, becauſe I think it the greateſt Abſurdity in Nature, and is not ſo properly a Species diſtinct from the other two I firſt mention'd, as the Abuſe and Corruption of them. For what can be more ridiculous, than, in the Compaſs of three Hours, to diſtract the Mind with Joy and Grief, in ſuch a Manner, that the two contrary Paſſions may debilitate, or totally extinguiſh each other? How ill are ſuch incoherent Parts united? And what is it but a monſtrous Production?

[q] —— *Turpiter atrum*
Deſinit in piſcem mulier formoſa ſuperne.
A handſome Woman with a Fiſh's Tail. *Roſcom.*

How irrational a Tranſition is it, from beholding the Conflicts of Kings and Heroes with Misfortunes, to deſcend, on a ſudden, to low Scenes of Ribaldry, and to return again from theſe to ſo moving a Spectacle! A Poem, indeed, ſhould be adorn'd with Variety, but not with Inconſiſtencies. The Paſſions, likewiſe, and Affections of the Mind, ſhould be bent and bow'd down; but ſo bent, that they may not grow languid, but recover new Strength. This poetic Kind of Prodigy, I think, is altogether modern, and chiefly of *Britiſh* Extraction; for it was the laſt Age produc'd Multitudes of them in our own Tongue. I know very well that the learned *Voſſius*[r], ſpeaking of the Plays of the Ancients di-

[q] Hor. De Art. Poet. ℣ 3. [r] Inſtit. Poet. L. II. c. 7.

vided

vided into *Prætextatæ* and *Togatæ*, obſerves, that "there was a *mix'd* Kind, call'd *Tabernariæ*, where "ſome of the Perſons appear'd in the *Prætexta*, "others in the *Toga*. Thus *Feſtus* in *Pomponius* "*Lætus*: *The* Togatæ *were of two Kinds*, viz. *the* "Prætextatæ, *when the Actors repreſented Perſons* "*of Quality, ſuch as had the Liberty of wearing* "*the* Prætexta; *and the* Tabernariæ, *when Perſons* "*of low Rank were mix'd with others of Birth and* "*Figure*. From hence it is plain, if the *Prætextatæ* "were a Sort of Tragedies, and the *Togatæ* Come-"dies; the *Tabernariæ* being of a mix'd Nature, "were what *Plautus* calls Tragi-Comedies. Such is "the *Amphitryo* of *Plautus*, and *Hercules Licymnius* "of the *Greeks*." And as abſurd as theſe Poems were, they agreed ſo far, only, with our Tragi-Comedies, that they mix'd Perſons of high and low Rank together; but they never debas'd the Misfortunes of the former with the Laſciviouſneſs of the latter, as is uſual with our Writers. As to the *Mimi*, *Pantomimi*, the *Nomi*, and the *Attellani*, they don't ſo much come within the Province of a Criticiſm on Poetry, as of a Hiſtory of it; ſince the Writings of the Ancients, in this Way, are now quite out of Date. They that are deſirous of this Part of Knowledge, may conſult other Writers, and *Voſſius* particularly. But there's another Species of Dramatic Folly, which the Ancients were utter Strangers to, the *Opera's*, I mean, introduc'd among us from foreign Parts, by the mercenary Traffic of Eunuchs and Courtezans: Among us, I ſay, and it is with Shame I ſpeak it, who ſet a Value upon every Thing that is foreign; and are laugh'd at, on that Account, by the very Foreigners we admire. Too fatal an Indication this, of the Depravity of our Taſte, as well as of our Manners, when we place the Height of our Pleaſure in thoſe Things, which it would

would be too much to honour, even with a Toleration. Metre, no doubt, is very ſuitable to Poetry, eſpecially to the Dramatic Kind, and ought often to be us'd there, as it is a proper Inſtrument of raiſing or ſoothing the Paſſions: But that the whole Drama ſhould be Sing-Song, that the Actors ſhould always appear

[f] *Et* cantare *pares, & reſpondere parates.*
Well pair'd to ſing,
And ready with each other's Skill to vie.

that the moſt inſignificant Action, as well as the deepeſt Paſſion, ſhould be expreſs'd in Tune; and whether they ſend a Meſſage, or read a Letter; whether they quarrel, fight, kill, or are kill'd; whether they laugh, or ſtorm, or die; that this ſhould all be perform'd in Song, is ſomewhat more monſtrous than the Poets ever yet deſcrib'd *. Whatever Share of Poetry theſe Performances can pretend to, is ſo wretchedly ſilly, that it does not deſerve our Notice. Thoſe Words of *Horace* are

[f] Virg. Eclog. VII. ℣ 5.

* And yet it ſeems to be an agreed Point among many of the Learned, that the Plays of the Ancients were acted in a Kind of Recitative ſet to the Flute. See this proved by *Cruſius*, in his Lives of the *Roman* Poets, in the Introduction to Dramatic Poets, § IV. Dr. *Bentley*, in his Preface to *Terence*, takes it for granted. See, likewiſe, *Cic. ad. Brutum*, § 55. The Objections which Dr. *Trapp* makes againſt it, would hold, in ſome Degree, againſt Chanting: And perhaps both may be accounted for, from the ſame prudential Reaſon, *viz.* That the Voice, when continued for ſome Time very elevated, naturally falls into a Tone, and yet it was neceſſary it ſhould be very elevated in the ancient Theatre, which was very large, as well as in Cathedrals. To prevent the Diſagreeableneſs of this, it was regulated by a ſort of Muſic.

truly applicable to them, and in a more proper Senſe, than he was ever aware of:

[a] —— *Verſus inopes rerum, nugæque* canoræ.

Mere ſounding Trifles, Verſes void of Senſe.

'Tis then for the Muſic, only, they are follow'd. My ſincere Wiſhes are, that Muſic may for ever flouriſh; but by no Means at the Expulſion of Poetry, whereas both Comedy and Tragedy ſeem, at preſent, to have been baniſh'd our Country, and yielded up the Stage to the *Opera*; I will farther add, if I may ſay ſo much, with humble Submiſſion to better Judges, even Muſic itſelf, when join'd with theſe empty Rhythms, ſeems too light and childiſh, and, by the frequent Repetition of the ſame Sound, tireſome. And tho' I readily grant, that the great Maſters of *Italy*, in former Ages, far exceeded ours; yet we have now ſuch Artiſts, as, from imitating the immortal *Purcell*, are arriv'd to a greater Perfection than any which *Italy*, *France*, or *Germany* ſend us. For, you muſt know,

[b] —— *Huc omnes tanquam ad vivaria currunt.*

Chas'd from their Woods and Bogs the Padders come,
To this vaſt City, as their native Home. *Dryden.*

They live upon us; our ambitious Poverty, our Luxury, Folly, and Vices, are all ſubſervient to their Advantage; to the utter Neglect and Contempt of our own Countrymen. Broken and unnerv'd *Britains!* into what a ſhameful Effeminacy are we ſunk? Far, far be it from us, to detract, in the leaſt, from the Merit of our Neighbours; but let us not be injurious to our own Countrymen, merely becauſe they are ſuch: Let the Rule hold,

[a] Hor. De Art. Poet. v. 322. [b] Juv. Sat. III.

not only in greater Things, but even in these of less Moment, (which are yet of greater than they seem to be)

[w] *Vincat amor patriæ* ——
His Country's Love
Shall conquer.

[x] —— *Non possum ferre, Quirites,*
Græcam urbem.
To speak my Mind,
I hate in *Rome* a *Grecian* Town to find. *Dryden.*

Having thus set aside these spurious Offsprings, Comedy and Tragedy remain now to be discours'd of distinctly, after I have first said something of what relates to them in common, that is, to Dramatic Poetry in general.

The History of the ancient Drama, both *Greek* and *Roman*, as it does not come within my present Design, I leave to be learnt from *Vossius*, and others. I shall only lay before you the following Passage, from his *Poetical Institutions*, which may serve for a short View of it. [y] "The Drama, says he, owes its "Rise to Days of Festivity. For in ancient Times "'twas usual for Men, when they had collected in "the Fruits of the Earth, to meet together, that "they might sacrifice to the Deity, and unbend their "Minds from the Fatigues of the Harvest. Hence "arose two Sorts of Poetry; the one graver, in "Praise of the Gods; the other jocose, full of "Lampoon against one another. Under the for-"mer Head we may reckon the *Dithyrambics* of "*Bacchus*, Hymns to the Gods, and Panegyrics upon "Heroes. Under the second *Iambics*, and *Phallic* "Verses. The first Essays were rough, and unpo-

[w] Æn. L. VI. [x] Juv. Sat. III. [y] Lib. II. c. II.

" liſh'd; but, by Degrees, the great Actions of Gods " and Heroes grew more numerous, and increas'd " into ſet Fables: So, in like manner, the jocoſe " Compoſitions began to come under proper Re- " gulations. Thus from the former Kind aroſe " Tragedy; from the latter, Satire, Comedy, and " Mimic." Thus he; agreeable to which, is *Virgil*, in his *Georgics*:

[z] —— *Baccho caper omnibus aris*
Cæditur, & veteres ineunt proſcenia ludi.
An horn'd He-Goat,
Sacred to *Bacchus*, on each Altar bleeds;
And ancient Interludes adorn the Scene.

And *Horace*, in his Epiſtle to *Auguſtus*:

[a] *Agricolæ priſci fortes, parvoque beati,*
Condita poſt frumenta, levantes tempore feſto
Corpus, & ipſum animum, &c.
The ancient Swains, thoſe temp'rate happy Swains,
Contented Sov'reigns of their little Plains,
When all their Corn was hous'd, wou'd make a Feaſt,
Unbend their Minds, and lay them down to reſt;
Their Cares diſſolv'd into a happy Thought,
And Minds enjoy'd the Reſt their Labour ſought.
Creech.

For the ſame Reaſon, I ſhall paſs over all the Apparatus of the ancient *Drama*, of which the forementioned learned Author, and many others, have treated fully; the Form, for Inſtance, and Ornaments of the Theatre, the *Scene*, *Proſcenium*, *Pulpitum*, *Orcheſtra*; the Habits of the Actors, as the *Toga*, *Pallium*, *Soccus*, *Cothurnus*, and many other Particulars of the like Nature. I cannot help, indeed, making

[z] L. II. ℣ 380. [a] ℣ 139, —℣ 155.

this

this one Remark, that the Mask of the Ancients has been, to me, Matter of Aſtoniſhment. For can any Thing in the World be more contradictory to Reaſon? The great Aim of the Drama has always been, to repreſent Nature herſelf, and conceal Art, as much as poſſible: The Poet, therefore, thought it his Buſineſs to draw the Characters of Men, as they really were. Is it the Cuſtom, then, I beſeech you, either for Kings and Heroes, on the one Hand, or the Commonalty, on the other, to walk about with Masks on? Why, then, do they appear with them, upon the Stage? If it is the Excellence of the Poet to counterfeit Nature, why are ſo much Pains thrown away, to convince the Spectators, that what they ſee is but an imperfect Copy of her. This Artifice might do well enough in Puppet Shews: But that the immortal Works of *Sophocles* and *Terence* ſhould be murder'd with ſo monſtrous a Device, is perfectly amazing. Beſides, (to omit the Impediment they muſt be to the Actor's Speech) is it uſual for Men to preſerve the ſame Countenance in all the poſſible Variety of Circumſtances? Why, then, muſt they do ſo upon the Stage? Where are the different Paſſions, of Joy or Sorrow, and the various Turns of the Muſcles that expreſs them? At this Rate, indeed, *Horace*'s Rule is preſerv'd according to the Letter, tho' very far from the Senſe of it:

[b] ——— *Servetur ad imum*
Qualis ab incepto proceſſerat, & ſibi conſtet.
Let all the Parts agree, and be alike. *Creech.*

I cannot help wondering, that *Horace*, and the reſt of the great Critics of *Greece* and *Rome*, ſhould have borne with this *Opprobrium* of the Theatre*. How much

M 3

[b] De Art. Poet. ✝ 126.

* The forecited Author, Mr. *Cruſius*, thinks them to have

much better is it for the Perſons to appear as they do among us, with their own Face, and, to uſe our own academical Term, each habited according to his *Degree.* Nor am I perfectly ſatisfied with the Sock and Buskin of the Ancients, tho' undoubtedly a leſs Abſurdity than the Mask; for we all know, that the Commonalty did not, in Fact, wear the Sock, nor the Nobility the Buskin; and why Actors ſhould appear only as Actors, I can ſee no Reaſon, ſince it *is* the Buſineſs of the Poet to imitate Nature, and conceal Art and Fiction as much as poſſible.

As I before determin'd to paſs over the Hiſtory, and the Decoration of the Drama, ſo I had much leſs Inclination to deſcribe the muſical Inſtruments that were made uſe of in it; this *is* rather the Province of Muſicians and Antiquaries, than Poets or Criticks. The various Kinds of Flutes, the *Tibicines*, *Choraules*, *Pythaules*, &c. are abundantly explain'd by *Voſſius*, whom we have often had Occaſion to mention.

To come, then, at laſt, to the Subject that properly concerns us: The Drama, I define to be, *A Poem containing ſome certain Action, and repreſenting*

have been of great Uſe and Expediency to the Ancients; "Their Stage being very large, and their Plays acted by "Day-light, the natural Features of the Face, at ſuch a "Diſtance, and without the Help of falſe Lights, could "not appear diſtinguiſhable enough, to expreſs the ſeveral "Characters. Beſides the adapting Masks to each Cha"racter, very much contributed to the Entertainment of "the Audience; ſince hereby they could better imagine "they ſaw the Perſons repreſented in the Play, than we "can, who are ſtill apt to loſe the Character in the Player; "not to mention this other Diſadvantage of the ſame "Face appearing in the different Characters of Prince "and Pimp, Hero and Villain, old and young." *Ibid.* Sect. III. So that what they loſt in expreſſing the Variety of Paſſion, they gain'd in the Variety of Character.

a true

a true Picture of human Life, for the Delight and Improvement of Mankind.

A certain *Action*, I say, in the singular, because it ought to be but *one*; two do but distract the Minds of the Audience, and create more Uneasiness than Pleasure. In many, indeed, I may say most Tragedies, as well as Comedies, but in Comedies more particularly, two Actions seem to be carried on; but they are often only seemingly two, not so in Reality. One of them is so subservient to the other, so united, and interwoven with it, that it must be reckon'd rather a Part of the same, than a distinct Action. Like a small River that branches out from a greater, which returns to its first Channel, and is totally lost in it. But in some Plays the Action is entirely one, and tho' the other Kind may be justly admitted, nay, often admir'd; yet this must be allow'd the more excellent of the two; for it requires a much nicer Art to excite Pleasure and Admiration by a proper Conduct of one simple Tale, than from a Variety of surprizing Incidents. Besides, when the Mind is solicitous only about one Event, the Thoughts are more close and compact, the Expectation more attentive, the Concern more exquisite, and the Impressions strike deeper than when it is distracted and weaken'd between two different Prospects. Here, therefore, *Horace*'s Rule is more *peculiarly* directed, tho' propos'd by him in general:

[c] —— *Sit quod vis simplex duntaxat & unum.*

True, indeed, it is, according to the Principles of Nature, and Natural Philosophy, that all Things, the more simple they are, and less compounded, are the more perfect, and less subject to Change and Corruption, to Vice and Error. This appears ma-

[c] De Art. Poet. ℣ 23.

nifeſtly, from a Compariſon between the Body and Soul, the Creature and the Creator.

Twentieth Lecture.

Tho' the Words, *Fable*, *Action*, and *Deſign*, are frequently us'd indiſcriminately, they have each of them peculiar and diſtinct Ideas. By the *Action* is meant ſome Adventure of one or other of the principal Perſons, attended by a great and memorable Event. By the *Fable*, or Plot, a Heap of Incidents, Epiſodes, and other Things, which are ſubſervient to the carrying on the Action, and bringing it to a Concluſion. The *Deſign* is a particular Diſpoſal of the ſeveral Parts, ſo as they may be artfully interwoven, and unfolded. What we call the *Diſtinction* of *Perſons* or *Characters*, the *Paſſions*, *Thought* and *Diction*, are certain Adjuncts and Circumſtances adhering to the Perſons repreſented. Theſe Things, tho' of the greateſt Moment, and the chief Concern of the Poet, which we ſhall treat of ſingly in their proper Place, it ſhall ſuffice to have mention'd only at preſent; becauſe they don't ſo properly come under the Head we are upon, of the *Drama* in *general*. When we come to the diſtinct Species of it, theſe will then offer themſelves very naturally.

I would now, however, obſerve, that thoſe general Precepts of *Horace* relate to the Drama, where he ſpeaks *firſt* of the *Paſſions*, *Thought*, and *Diction*:

[a] *Non ſatis eſt pulchra eſſe poemata; dulcia ſunto,*
Et, quocunque volent, animum auditoris agunto.
Ut ridentibus arrident, ita flentibus adſunt
Humani vultus: Si vis me flere, dolendum eſt
Primum ipſe tibi; tunc tua me infortunia lædunt,
Telephe, vel Peleu: male ſi mandata loqueris,
Aut dormitabo, aut ridebo. Triſtia mœſtum
Vultum verba decent, iratum plena minarum,

[a] 99.

Ludentem

Ludentem laſciva, ſeverum ſeria dicta.
Format enim natura prius nos intus ad omnem
Fortunarum habitum; juvat, aut impellit ad iram,
Aut ad humum mœrore gravi deducit, & angit:
Poſt effert animi motus, interprete lingua.

He that wou'd have Spectators ſhare his Grief,
Muſt write not only well, but movingly,
And raiſe Mens Paſſions to what Height he will.
We weep and laugh, as we ſee others do.
He only makes me ſad, who ſhews the Way,
And firſt is ſad himſelf. Then, *Telephus*,
I feel the Weight of your Calamities,
And fancy all your Miſeries my own;
But if you act them ill, I ſleep, or laugh:
Your Looks muſt alter, as your Subject does,
From kind to fierce, from wanton to ſevere;
For Nature forms and ſoftens us within,
And writes our Fortunes Changes in our Face:
Pleaſure enchants, impetuous Rage tranſports,
And Grief dejects, and wrings the tortur'd Soul,
And theſe are all interpreted by Speech. *Roſcom.*

Next of the *Characters*, or the different Circumſtances, and Diſpoſitions of the Perſons:

* *Si dicentis erunt fortunis abſona dicta,*
Romani tollent Equites, Peditesque cachinnum.
Intererit multum Davuſne loquatur, an Heros,
Maturuſne ſenex, an adhuc florente juventa
Fervidus, an matrona potens, an ſedula nutrix,
Mercatorne vagus, cultorne virentis agelli,
Colchus, an Aſſyrius, Thebis nutritus, an Argis.

But he whoſe Words and Fortune diſagree,
Abſurd, unpitied, grows a public Jeſt.
Obſerve the Characters of thoſe that ſpeak,
Whether an honeſt Servant, or a Cheat;

Or one whoſe Blood boils in his youthful Veins,
Or a grave Matron, or a buſy Nurſe,
Extorting Merchants, careful Husbandmen,
Argives or *Thebans*, *Aſians* or *Greeks*. *Roſcom.*

The ſubject Matter of this Kind of Poem, is call'd the *Fable*, tho' it is often grounded upon true Hiſtory; becauſe the greateſt Part of it is fabulous, tho' the Fiction be intermix'd with Matter of Fact. When it is not ſo, it ought to be ſtyled rather a *Dramatical Hiſtory*, than *Drama*; of which Sort are many of the Plays of our celebrated Countryman*, who has crowded together the Annals of ſome of our Kings, without any Regard to the dramatical Rules of Time or Place. But in other Reſpects, he

[f] —— *Spirat tragicum ſatis, & feliciter audet.*

With happy Boldneſs draws a tragic Scene.

Yes, extremely happy, and in *theſe* Works, but more eſpecially in his truer Tragedies, has deſerv'd well of Poſterity.

But often the Drama, properly ſo call'd, is built upon true Hiſtory; as the *Octavia* of *Seneca*, and many of our modern Tragedies, both *Engliſh* and *French*, (for *Comedy* has rarely ſuch a Foundation; but is either rais'd from ſome private Fact, which, tho' true, is below Hiſtory; or from Fiction only;) ſometimes, indeed, it is built upon Fable, but ſuch as is common, and well known; as the *Trachiniæ* of *Sophocles*, *Oedipus*, &c. the Author diſpoſing of the Fable according to his own Fancy, and giving it a new Appearance: According to that of *Horace*:

[g] *Publica materies privati juris erit, ſi*
Nec circa vilem, patulumque moraberis orbem,

* *Shakeſpear.* [f] Horat. ad Aug. ℣ 166.
[g] De Art. Poet. ℣ 131.

Nec

Nec verbum verbo curabis reddere, fidus
Interpres.

For what originally others writ,
May be so well disguis'd, and so improv'd,
That with some Justice it may pass for yours.
Roscommon.

Sometimes it is built upon the Poet's Invention only, who forms an entire Plot out of his own Head. Most of the Ancients, both *Greeks* and *Romans*, form'd their Tragedies upon fabulous History; most of the Moderns either upon true History, or upon Fiction of their own Invention, or such as has been borrow'd from Romances of later Writers; which tho' they are fabulous, are not, however, trite and vulgar, like several of the Ancients; as the *Medea*, for Instance, *Hercules*, *Iphigenia*, and the like.

In the Foundation of the Drama, *Horace*'s Rule, in the first Place, ought to be observ'd:

[h] *Aut famam sequere, aut sibi convenientia finge,*
Scriptor.

Follow Report, or feign coherent Things.
Roscommon.

If it is built either upon true or fabulous History, let nothing be introduc'd contrary to the Notices we have receiv'd from Fame or History, of the Persons concern'd in it. For, in this Case, the Faith of the one, and the Report of the other, would openly contradict the Fiction. A noble Critic of ours [i] has severely lash'd a certain Poet [k] for this Fault, *viz.* for representing *Hannibal* soft, effeminate, and languishing in the Blandishments of Love; and *Scipio* passionate, and head-strong. But if the whole is Fiction, let it be Fiction according to Probability.

[h] *Ars* 119. [i] *John* Earl of *Rochester*. [k] *Nat. Lee.*

Let the Writer take care that the Parts don't disagree, and contradict each other. Here, again, *Horace's* Maxim is of Force:

[i] *Si quid inexpertum ſcenæ committis, & audes*
Perſonam formare novam; ſervetur ad imum
Qualis ab incepto proceſſerit, & ſibi conſtet.
If your bold Muſe dare tread unbeaten Paths,
And bring new Characters upon the Stage,
Be ſure you keep them up to their firſt Height.
Roſcommon.

To *follow Fame* in an honeſt Senſe, and to form a good Poem out of Hiſtory, requires much Art, and no ſmall Invention. But a Poet that works wholly upon his own Stock, ſhews ſcarce leſs Art, but certainly more Invention. The latter is, in my Judgment, the more noble Task. As it is wholly new, it is ſure to afford more Pleaſure to the Audience, and Honour to the Writer: He may be ſaid, in ſome Senſe, to *create* his Materials, and is, therefore, in the moſt proper one, a *Poet*.

I am well aware, that what I have here advanc'd, ſeems to contradict the following Opinion of *Horace*:

[k] *Difficile eſt proprie communia dicere; tuque*
Rectius Iliacum carmen deducis in actus,
Quam ſi proferres ignota, indictaque primus.
New Subjects are not eaſily explain'd,
And you had better chuſe a well-known Theme,
Than truſt to an Invention of your own. *Roſcom.*

But not to inſiſt that the Authority of the beſt of Poets and Criticks is not to ſuperſede Reaſon and Experience; it is to be obſerv'd, that dramatical Invention has been much improv'd ſince the Times in

[i] *v.* 125. [k] *v.* 128.

which

which *Horace* writ: And had he ſeen ſome of our late Tragedies, form'd upon Fiction only, he would, perhaps, have retracted his Opinion. It is a difficult Thing, I allow, *to expreſs* COMMON *Things in a proper Manner*, that is, to change and heighten ſome noted, * ſtale Subject, ſo as to give it a new Appearance, and make it the Writer's own; and the Obſervation is of great Weight: But, all Things conſider'd, whether we regard the Difficulty or the Elegance, the Judgment or Ingenuity of each Compoſition; greater Glory ſeems to be due to him that produces a new Plan of his own Invention, than that changes, and gives new Life to an old one.

According to the modern Criticks, every regular Play conſiſts of three Unities, *viz.* of *Time*, *Place*, and *Action*. I have already ſpoke of the laſt: The firſt, I would obſerve, is very improperly ſtyled an *Unity*. *Place* and *Action* may admit of Number; but *Time*, howſoever extended, does not ceaſe to be *one*, with Reſpect to the Action which is continu'd by it. This Obſervation, I own, is but of little Moment, ſince all that make uſe of the Term, ſufficiently underſtand the Meaning of it, however inaccurately expreſs'd.

As to *Time*, *Ariſtotle*, and after him the great *Voſſius*, and others, will not allow it above the Compaſs of one Day; for which Reaſon, the *Heautontimoroumenos* of *Terence* is reckon'd faulty, becauſe it takes up an entire Day, and part of another. But if we were to reduce Things to the greateſt Exactneſs,

* *Materiam vulgarem, notam, & e medio petitam.* But *Roſcommon* above, and, I think, moſt of the Commentators, make *communia* to be the ſame with what follows, *ignota inditaque*, i.e. *common*, till you took them, ſuch as were no-body's Property before. In this Senſe, *Horace*, as Dr. *Trapp* ſays, contradicts his Opinion of new Subjects being better than old.

the

the Action of the Drama ought not to be longer than the Repreſentation of it upon the Stage. This, no doubt, would be the compleateſt Rule, could it be practis'd. But tho' it will rarely or never paſs for a Probability, that ſo great Events ſhould fall out in ſo ſhort a Time, yet we ought to come as near to this Maxim as we can. To ſee the Ten Years *Trojan* War crowded into the narrow Limits of one Tragedy, about three or four Hours long, appears, at firſt View, not only improbable, but impoſſible, and will be rejected by the Audience as a monſtrous Impoſition on their Underſtanding.

The Unity of *Place* ought to be preſerv'd, for the ſame Reaſon I before alledg'd for the Unity of *Time*. The one ſuppoſes the other; for if *Place* is varied, *Time* muſt be ſo too. If the Action takes up but a few Hours, it is impoſſible it ſhould be carried on in Places widely diſtant. On the other Hand, if it is tranſacted partly at *London*, and partly at *Oxford*, a few Hours will not be ſufficient. But there's another Reaſon, with Regard even to Place itſelf, why this Rule, concerning the Unity of it, ought to be obſerv'd. What an Abſurdity is it, for a Spectator to ſuppoſe himſelf one Minute at *Rome*, and the next at *Paris*? We cannot but deſpiſe a Poet, who is ſuch a Bungler at Fiction, as, in a different Senſe from that of *Horace*,

[1] —— *Modo me Thebis, modo ponit Athenis.*
Now places me at *Athens*, now at *Thebes*.

It is beyond the Power of any Magic to tranſport us into different Places, not only at the ſame Time, but even while we are in the ſame Place. The uſual Limits of the Drama are within the Compaſs of one Town or City: This ſome think too great, others

[1] Ad Aug. ℣ 213.

too

too narrow an Extent. Larger it certainly ought not to be: Nor is this probably too large. For tho' it may not ſeem very natural for the Audience to be carried from one End of the City to the other; yet it may be impoſſible, perhaps, to repreſent the Action itſelf, and ſome other Circumſtances attending it, in leſs Compaſs; and, as we ſaid before of Time, when we cannot come up to Truth, it muſt ſuffice to come as near to it as poſſible. For, as *Horace* ſays, upon another Occaſion,

[m] *Eſt quadam prodire tenus, ſi non datur ultra.*
What if of farther Progreſs you deſpair,
'Tis ſomewhat, ſurely, to have gone ſo far. *Creech.*

However, they are much more in the wrong, who confine the general Scene within one Room, or Chamber; for it is ridiculous to ſuppoſe, that Perſons of moſt diſtant Circumſtances ſhould meet, or Actions of the moſt different Kind be perform'd, in the ſame Place, or in ſo narrow an one. Truth, then, ſeems to lie, as it generally does, between both Extremes; and one Houſe, perhaps, may be ſaid to be the juſt Extent of the dramatical Scene. It ought not to be of greater Extent, becauſe Perſons of all Ranks and Qualities are, in Reality, contain'd under one Roof, and Actions of all Kinds perform'd in that Compaſs. It ought not to be of a narrower; becauſe the Spectators, whether they ſit in the Pit, or Boxes, may very eaſily conceive different Parts of the ſame Houſe repreſented in the Scenes, ſince the Theatre is large enough to contain one Houſe entire, and both the Perſons of the Drama, and the Spectators themſelves, may be ſuppos'd to move from one Side of it to the other.

[m] Lib. I. Ep. I. 32.

Theſe

These Unities of Action, Time, and Place, ought very carefully to be obſerv'd. For tho' a Play, form'd upon the moſt regular Plans, will gain but little Applauſe, if it is deſtitute of the true poetic Spirit; ſo will it deſerve as little, how much ſoever it may be ſet off with Decoration, if it offends againſt the Rules of the Drama. The former, with all its Regularity, is cold and lifeleſs; the latter, with all its Brightneſs, abſurd and ridiculous. Let Rules be firſt the Baſis of the Poem, and from a right Diſpoſal of theſe, let the Ornaments ariſe naturally, and with Eaſe. Colouring in Painting, is, no doubt, an Excellence; but we are not to be ſo ſtudious of it, as to neglect Proportion, and tranſgreſs the Laws of Optics. Beſides, great Judgment and Caution muſt be us'd, that we don't adhere ſo cloſe to one Rule, as to violate another. *Horace*'s Obſervation is here undoubtedly juſt:

[a] *In vitium ducit culpæ fuga, ſi caret arte.*

Thus Fear of Erring, join'd with want of Skill,
Is a moſt certain Way of erring ſtill. *Roſcom.*

A Misfortune, which, in this Caſe, it is very difficult to guard againſt.

To theſe three Unities, as they are uſually reckon'd up, we may not improperly add a fourth: That of *Character*, which I juſt mention'd before, but now deſign to explain more fully. By a *Character*, I underſtand, that Aſſemblage of Circumſtances which diſcriminates one Man from another; ſuch as Age, Fortune, Manners, and Inclination. In this Reſpect, then, let each *Perſon* be *one* from Beginning to the End. Not that he is always to betray the ſame Sentiments, or one Paſſion; this would be as abſurd as it is tedious; but that he ſhould never

[a] De Art. Poet. ℣ 31.

ſpeak,

ſpeak, nor act repugnant to his own *fundamental Character*. An old or young Man, for Inſtance, a King or Servant may, nay, ought, as Occaſion ſerves, to ſhew the common Paſſions of Joy or Sorrow. But for an old Man to be introduc'd in the firſt Act; and to appear a young one in the ſecond, is inverting Nature. Again, the Meek may ſometimes ſally into a Warmth, and the Breaſt of the Paſſionate be calm; a Change which often introduces in the Drama very affecting Variety: But if the natural *Diſpoſition* of the former was to be repreſented as boiſterous, and that of the latter mild and ſoft, they would both act out of Character, and contradict their Perſons. The Temper of a Man, I own, is ſometimes entirely chang'd; a vicious Diſpoſition may be reform'd, and a good one corrupted: But this is a Change which cannot be wrought in ſo ſhort a Time as the Action of the Drama takes up. It may be much doubted, therefore, whether the unravelling of the Plot in *Terence's Adelphi* is agreeable to Truth and Nature, where *Demea*, from an old Miſer, turns, of a ſudden, profuſe, and lays aſide his Moroſeneſs, for Good-nature; and *Micio*, who had hitherto liv'd ſingle, and dreaded the married State as the greateſt of Sins, in his old Age, at laſt, by the Perſuaſion of his Brother and Nephew, marries an old Woman, without a Fortune.

Twenty-firſt Lecture.

The *Engliſh* Drama differs in nothing more from the ancient, than in Narration and Action. Of both theſe Heads, *Horace* delivers himſelf thus:

* *Aut agitur Res in ſcenis, aut acta refertur.*
Segnius irritant animos demiſſa per aurem,

* ℣ 179.

Quam

Quam quæ ſunt oculis ſubjecta fidelibus, & quæ
Ipſe ſibi tradit ſpectator: Non tamen intus
Digna geri promes in ſcenam; multaque tolles
Ex oculis, quæ mox narret facundia præſens.
Nec pueros coram populo Medea trucidet,
Aut humana palam coquat exta nefarius Atreus;
Aut in avem Progne mutetur, Cadmus in anguem:
Quodcunque oſtendis mihi ſic, incredulus odi.

Some Things are acted, others only told;
But what we hear, moves leſs than what we ſee:
Spectators only have their Eyes to truſt,
But Auditors muſt truſt their Ears and you;
Yet there are Things improper for a Scene,
Which Men of Judgment only will relate.
Medea muſt not draw her murd'ring Knife,
And ſpill her Children's Blood upon the Stage;
Nor *Atreus* there his horrid Feaſt prepare:
Cadmus's and *Progne*'s Metamorphoſis,
(She to a Swallow turn'd, he to a Snake)
And whatſoever contradicts my Senſe,
I hate to ſee, and never can believe. *Roſcom.*

We then have more Action, and leſs Narration, than the Ancients, who, in this Particular, are imitated in Tragedy, by the *French*, and moſt other Nations. But if our *Britiſh* Writers may preſume to diſſent from ſo great Authority, I would aſk, Why may not Ladies of the firſt Rank be ſuppos'd to ſpeak in Comedy; or Heroes ſometimes combat, or even die upon the Stage, in Tragedy? There's no Abſurdity in this; nothing contrary to Art or Nature; often much conducive to Terror or Compaſſion. No one, indeed, would bear to ſee *Atreus* repreſented boiling human Fleſh; it is too ghaſtly a Spectacle to be expos'd to View; and, inſtead of Pity, or Terror, would excite Deteſtation. For the ſame Reaſon, *Medea*, killing her Sons, ſhould not be exhibited.

But

But there are ſtill ſome Images of Death leſs ſhocking, which may be well adapted to the Stage. I own, however, we are apt to introduce ſome Things publickly, which had better have been ſunk in Narration, and ſome in Silence, if Regard were had to the inviolable Rules of Modeſty, Decency, and Virtue. Upon the whole, then, the Ancients brought too little into Action, and we too much.

Upon this Head, I would only obſerve farther, that I have one Scruple remaining from theſe Words, *incredulus odi*, in the Paſſage I above cited from *Horace*. Things that are not at all *incredible*, may, for ſeveral other Reaſons, be improper to be repreſented, tho' they may make a very becoming Narration: And what exceeds all Belief, we ſhall no more bear to hear, than behold. And even thoſe Inſtances which *Horace* mentions as improper to be repreſented, have nothing *incredible* in them, but upon *other Accounts* are not fit to be obtruded upon the Spectators. The Anſwer to this Objection is, that the Words *incredulus odi* are not to be taken ſeparately, but jointly. Of the Sights *Horace* mentions, ſome are *odious*, others *incredible*; not *incredible* in the *Nature of Things*, for they are ſuppos'd to be Miracles exceeding all human Power; but *incredible* in *theatrical Repreſentation*. Such monſtrous Changes, as of *Progne* into a Bird; *Cadmus* into a Serpent; are too groſs to be impos'd upon the Senſes: They are Repreſentations, therefore, not ſo much *odious*, as *ridiculous*.

There is one Fault which almoſt all the dramatic Writers, both Tragic and Comic, Ancient and Modern, have fallen into; that, I mean, of introducing a Perſon who has no other Buſineſs but to hold out a Dialogue, and hear a Story. This, to omit other Examples, is the Caſe, in two of *Terence*'s Comedies, the *Andria*, and *Phormio*. In the former of which,

which, *Sofia* is introduc'd, that *Simo* may lay before him the whole Plot of the Play; afterwards we neither ſee him, nor hear a Word of him more. In the latter, *Davus* holds a Colloquy with *Geta*, only to hear the Amours of *Phædria* and *Antipho*, which he has nothing to do with: Then he goes off the Stage, and never ſets Foot upon it more: Whereas, all that ſupport a Dialogue of any Moment, ought, in ſome Meaſure, to be intereſted in the Buſineſs of the Play, from one End to the other. But theſe adventitious Perſons deſtroy the Beauty and Symmetry of it; which ought not, like Gothick Buildings, to be disfigur'd with Props and Buttreſſes, and other ſuperfluous Out-works; but form'd rather according to the Rules of *ancient* Architecture, where all the Columns, and ſeveral Parts of the Fabrick, mutually ſupport each other; where there's nothing but what is neceſſary, nothing but what is beautiful; and the whole therefore beautiful, becauſe every Thing is neceſſary.

But farther; that all the Parts may rightly cohere together, ſome Reaſon ſhould appear, why each Perſon goes out, and comes in. This is a Rule of great Moment, tho' generally over-look'd; and yet there is nothing in the whole Compaſs of the Drama, more elegant, or more difficult; nothing in which Art and Judgment are more nearly concern'd. *Exit* ſuch an one, ſays the Poet; *enter* another: But a Reaſon may often be ask'd, both for one, and the other. It is not enough to anſwer, it was neceſſary, for the Author's main Deſign, that it ſhould be ſo. The Audience ought to be appriz'd of the Buſineſs for which the ſeveral Perſons come in, and go out, and on what Account the Stay of any of them would have been improper. With theſe Notices, every Thing will appear to them eaſy and natural; but otherwiſe, forc'd, and inconſiſtent

As

As a Play is divided into Acts, ſo are the Acts into Scenes. The former the more ancient Diviſion of the two. The Act concludes, when the Stage is left entirely empty; and a new one begins, as ſoon as one or more Perſons come on again; the intermediate Time being taken up with Dancing or Muſic. The Scene changes as every Actor comes in, or goes out, according to the general Opinion; but in mine, I think a Play had better be divided into Acts only, without any Diſtinction of Scenes between the Acts: For the Place, during one Act, is always the ſame, and without Intermiſſion of Perſons or Diſcourſe. Thus, I ſay, it is, in all Performances, that are writ according to the true Rules of the Drama. But if any one ſhall maintain, that the Scene ought to change with every Actor's coming in, or going out, I ſhall not contend much about it, ſince it is a Diſpute about Words, rather than Things. This, however, is certain, that what we call *broken* Scenes, ought to be totally avoided; thoſe, I mean, where, in one and the ſame Act, the Play is disjointed, and the Stage, for ſome Time, left vacant. To omit the innumerable Inſtances I might give of this, among the Moderns, as well as Ancients, I ſhall mention *Terence* only, and one only of his Plays, the *Eunuch*. In the third Act, *Thais*, *Thraſo*, *Parmeno*, *Gnatho*, and *Pythias*, make up the ſecond Scene; and at the Concluſion of it they all leave the Stage. In the third Scene *Chremes* appears alone, and, for ſome Time, talks by himſelf; at length, *Pythias* comes in to him, and, after a few Speeches, both go out together: In the next Scene enters *Antipho*, he again alone. In the firſt Scene of the fourth Act *Dorias* comes in alone; ſhe goes out, and then comes *Phædria* alone. This incoherent Connexion of the ſeveral Parts of a Play, is not leſs diſagreeable than it would be in Architecture.

cture. The different Parts of a Fabrick are to be divided; but in an artful and commodious Manner. The ſeveral Acts in a Play reſemble the Wings of a Building; but broken Scenes are like gaping, diſjointed Walls.

This leads me naturally to ſay ſomewhat of *Soliloquies*, too much in Uſe with *Terence*, and others. They are not, indeed, totally to be rejected, but very ſuitable to ſome ſort of Matter, provided they are ſparingly us'd; particularly, they ſerve to unload the Mind of too much Grief or Joy; but are of more eſpecial Uſe in Speeches of the deliberative Kind. They are more adapted to Tragedy than Comedy; for it is moſt natural for Men to converſe with themſelves, when Matters of Moment and Concern lie heavy upon their Minds*. But *Terence* often introduces a Perſon, not to deliberate about Difficulties, but to relate what has paſs'd. In which Caſe, the Narration muſt be made to the Audience, or the Walls; and it is hard to ſay which of the two is the more abſurd Suppoſition.

Donatus, ſpeaking upon this Subject of the Drama, lays it down for a Rule, as *Voſſius* cites him, that *no Perſon ought to go off the Stage, above five Times.* And *Voſſius* [r] himſelf ſays, immediately after: *That this Rule, tho' it holds good in Tragedy, where the Perſons, as they are grave, ſo are likewiſe few; yet in Comedy is not always regarded.* No, ſay I, nor ought it to be regarded, either in Tragedy, or Comedy. And if I may be ſo bold as to diſſent from ſo great a Name as *Horace*, I cannot ſee the

* Beſides, in the ancient Tragedy the Chorus juſtified Soliloquies, who were ſuppoſed to be humane By-ſtanders, where the Scene was laid: Among the Rules given to the Chorus in *Horace*, one is, that they ſhould keep ſecret what they heard, *Ille tegat commiſſa*, Ar. Poet. ℣ 200.

[r] Inſtit. Poet. Lib. II. cap. 5.

Reaſon

Reaſon of that Rule of his, pretty much to the ſame Purpoſe:

[q] —— *Nec quarta loqui perſona laboret.*

And in one Scene no more than three ſhou'd ſpeak. *Roſcommon.*

What ſhould hinder, but every one may go in or out above five, ſix, or even ten Times, either in Tragedy, or Comedy, if he pleaſes? Or where's the Impropriety of more than three Speakers upon the Stage at once? Theſe are Maxims that have no Foundation in Truth, nor do they in the leaſt promote the Order of the Drama, or the Pleaſure of the Audience. They don't flow from the Nature of Things, but only from the arbitrary Will of the Directors. A Poet ſhackles himſelf to no Purpoſe, with theſe Fetters; and only makes his Performance appear ſtiff and lifeleſs, with the Severity of them. He might with as much Reaſon preſcribe to himſelf the determinate Number of Lines his Play ſhould conſiſt of. In all theſe Things a Writer is left to his Liberty, and the only Rule that can be given, is, to obſerve none.

As little do I ſee the Reaſon of *Voſſius*'s [r] Rule, in regard to the Number of Actors: *That there ſhould not be above fourteen.* To be ſure there ought not to be more; and, if we except the Mutes, concerning whom there's no Occaſion to lay down any Rule, there ought not, perhaps, to be ſo many. But for the Reaſons I before mention'd, I cannot ſee any for fixing a determinate Number. Every Thing of this Nature is to be left entirely to the Diſcretion of the Writer.

Nor is there any Neceſſity, from the *Nature* of

[q] De Arte Poet. ℣ 192. [r] Inſtit. Poet. Lib. II. c. 5.

the

the *Thing*, that there ſhould be juſt five Acts in a Play, according to that of *Horace*,

[f] *Neve minor, neu ſit quinto productior actu*
Fabula, quæ poſci vult, & ſpectata reponi.

Five Acts are juſt the Meaſure of a Play. *Roſc.*

After him, *Voſſius*, and others, *In a Play there are neither more nor leſs than Five Acts.* So, indeed, the Ancients have determin'd, and Cuſtom has prevail'd; and this, no doubt, is a very proper Diviſion; but there's no Foundation for it in Nature, and even the Acts are now, and always have been, of uncertain Length. And *Voſſius*, in the ſame Diſcourſe [t], obſerves, *Some think a Play may conſiſt only of four Acts, provided it be of a proper Length, ſuch as may be ſeen with Pleaſure, and underſtood with Eaſe. And 'tis a Remark of* Lambinus's, *that* Tully, *and ſome others of the Ancients, mention the third and fourth as the laſt Act; without any Notice of the fifth; ſo that the fourth may be underſtood the laſt. Nay, in his firſt Epiſtle to his Brother* Quintus, *the third ſeems to be the laſt Act. The Words are theſe:* " Illud te ad extremum & oro, & hortor, ut tan-
" quam poetæ boni, & actores induſtrii ſolent, ſic
" tu in extrema parte & concluſione muneris, ac ne-
" gotii tui, diligentiſſimus ſis; ut hic tertius annus
" imperii tui, tanquam tertius actus, perfectiſſimus,
" atque ornatiſſimus, fuiſſe videatur. *Laſtly, I beg*
" *and intreat you to exert yourſelf in the Concluſion of*
" *your Office, as artful Poets, and good Actors uſe to*
" *do; that ſo this third Year of your Command, may be*
" *like the third Act of a Play, the moſt perfect and or-*
" *namental.*" *Unleſs* Tully *meant no more, than that as Poets have a chief Regard to the laſt Act, you ſhould have the ſame for your third Year; which is to you, your laſt Act.*

[f] De Art. Poet. ℣ 189.

[t] Inſt. Poet. L. II. c. 5.

I can

I can by no means agree with the learned Author concerning the Diſtribution of the Buſineſs that is to be perform'd in each Act; who delivers himſelf in this Manner: "The firſt Act opens the Plot, but "not the Event of it; becauſe it would afford leſs "Surprize, to be known before-hand. The ſecond "brings on the Deſign into Action. The third raiſes "ſome Embarras. The fourth ſhews the Way by which "all Difficulties may be remov'd. The laſt artfully "removes them." I readily grant, the firſt Act ought to *open the Plot*. But this may be partly done in the ſecond; nor is it neceſſary the *whole* of it ſhould be laid open in the firſt. The firſt, likewiſe, as well as the ſecond, may *produce it into Action:* The ſecond, as well as the third, may *raiſe an Embarras*; and the fourth no leſs than the other two. The fourth ought not openly to diſcover how *Difficulties may be remov'd*, the Buſineſs, rather, of the fifth, which does that, and ſomewhat more. In this Caſe, then, (as I ſaid before in another) Rules are arbitrarily preſcrib'd, without any Foundation in Nature; but all theſe Things are to be diſpos'd according to the free Diſcretion of the Writer. Were it otherwiſe, the Audience would, in ſome Meaſure, know before-hand what they are to expect in every Act. There's no Neceſſity that one or the other Part of Action ſhould be peculiar to this or that Act; nor are any Rules requir'd about it, except thoſe which we are now coming to, that relate to what are term'd *Protaſis*, *Epitaſis*, and *Cataſtrophe*.

Twenty-ſecona Lecture.

The threefold Diviſion of the Drama, into *Protaſis*, *Epitaſis*, and *Cataſtrophe*, or, as others, in the Terms of *Ariſtotle*, to the very ſame Effect, into *Prologue*, *Epiſode*, and *Exode*, ſeems very natural and

[v] Ibid.

eaſy; tho' neither of theſe Diviſions is peculiar to any Act. By *Protaſis* is meant that Part which is a Narrative of what has paſs'd, and an Introduction to what is to follow: In the *Epitaſis*, *Incidents*, as they are call'd by the Moderns, ariſe; all Things are in Confuſion, involv'd in Doubts and Difficulties; and the Audience *anxious, and trembling for the Birth of Fate.* The *Cataſtrophe* clears up every Thing; and is nothing elſe but the Diſcovery, or winding up of the Plot. But theſe Parts, as I ſaid before, are not aſſignable to any particular ones of the Drama: There's no Neceſſity that all the *Protaſis* ſhould be contain'd in the firſt Act. The *Cataſtrophe*, indeed, has its peculiar Place; for it ought to be entirely contain'd, not only in the laſt Act, but even in the very Concluſion of it; and when the Plot is finiſh'd, the Play ſhould be ſo too. The *Epitaſis* runs thro' the whole, except the Beginning, and the Concluſion; the former is taken up entirely with part of the *Protaſis*, or the whole of it; the latter with the *Cataſtrophe*. 'Tis the *Epitaſis*, then, that ſupports the Weight and Burden of the Poem, upon which the Criſis of the Action chiefly turns. It far exceeds, therefore, the other two, in Extent; as it contains all the Revolutions of Circumſtances, the ſudden Changes, and ſurprizing Events, till, at length, we come to the *Cataſtrophe*, the laſt, and moſt ſurprizing Event of all.

If what we have now ſaid is true, 'tis plain *Voſſius* has not given a right Account of this Matter. "Of "theſe Parts in Comedy, the *Protaſis*, ſays he[w], is "contain'd in the firſt Act, and ſometimes, likewiſe, "in the ſecond: The *Epitaſis* in the ſecond, ſome-"times the third, and fourth, but very rarely any "Part of it in the fifth: The *Cataſtrophe* takes up

[w] Inſt. Poet. L. II. p. 24.

"ſometimes

ſometimes the fourth Act, or Part of it, but al-
ways the whole fifth, or almoſt the whole. From
whence it appears, that the Diviſion of the *Greeks*,
into *Protaſis*, *Epitaſis*, *Cataſtrophe* and *Choricus*, is
a better one than that of the *Romans* into five
Acts: For the *Greek* Diviſion diſtinguiſhes the
Drama into Parts that differ in *Nature*; whereas
the other Diviſion into Acts, conſiders them only
as different in *Quantity*, without regard to any in-
ternal Diſtinction." Now to paſs over his men-
tioning *Comedy*, whereas Tragedy is equally concern'd
in this Diviſion, I allow it to be very true, that the
Protaſis is contain'd in *the firſt Act, and ſometimes in
the ſecond likewiſe*; and I will add, ſometimes in any
other Act; tho' this ſeems to contradict *Voſſius's* Opi-
nion in another Place, where he ſays, *The firſt Act
unfolds the Plot*, as if that was the peculiar Buſineſs
of the firſt Act. I grant, alſo, that the *Epitaſis* is
contain'd in the ſecond, the third, and fourth; but
let me add, likewiſe, partly in the firſt, and partly in
the fifth: For there's no Act to which the *Epitaſis* is
not ſuitable; and I muſt be ſo bold as to deny, what
this learned Author aſſerts, that *there's rarely any
Part of it in the fifth*; ſo far is this from being
true, that ſome of it ought always to be in the fifth.
Nor do I grant *that the Cataſtrophe takes up ſome-
times the fourth Act, or Part of it, but always the
whole fifth, or almoſt the whole.* For the *Cataſtrophe*
ought to turn, as we ſay, upon a Point, to ſtart up,
on a ſudden; as ſoon as that is diſcover'd, the Play
ſhould conclude; and this End once obtain'd, all the
Action ceaſe: Otherwiſe, the Curioſity of the Au-
dience will be pall'd, and what promis'd Pleaſure,
will then appear inſipid and tedious. Nor had *Voſ-
ſius* any good Reaſon to compare this Diviſion of
Protaſis, *Epitaſis*, and *Cataſtrophe*, with that of five

Acts, as if these two Divisions were inconsistent*; whereas, from what has been said, it appears, they are very compatible, nay, I may say, include each other.

Scaliger [x] defines the Catastrophe to be a *Turn of Affairs that were before embroil'd into an unexpected Calm*; and *Evanthius*, (as *Vossius* [y] cites him) a *Turn of Affairs to a happy Conclusion, after the Audience have been Witnesses to what has pass'd.* Both wrong: For (as the same *Vossius* well observes) both Definitions suit only a Comic Catastrophe, not a Dramatic one in general. His own Definition is just, That *it is the End of a Play, where Fortune is seen to terminate in good or ill Success.*

The great Care in the *Catastrophe* is, that the clearing up of all Difficulties may appear wonderful, and yet easy, simple, and natural. What *Cicero* says of Friendship, is true of the Dramatic Fable, it is a Knot that must be *untied*, not *cut*: And in such a Manner, that tho' all admire the Event, yet, at the same Time, are sensible within themselves, that the Stream of Affairs could scarce have taken another Course. This, I confess, is a difficult Task; indeed nothing can be more so, than to raise our Astonishment from the regular Effects of Nature. There are, however, some Instances of this Art, that can never be enough admir'd; among the modern Writers especially, and no where more than among those of our own Country; who, in the Conduct and Design of the Drama, in my Opinion, leave the Ancients very far behind them.

Another Thing the Poet should take Care of is, to conceal the Event from the Audience till the Conclusion of the Play. The Reason of this is so plain,

* Nor, with Submission, does *Vossius* suppose them inconsistent.

[x] Poet. L. I. c. 9. [y] Inst. Poet. L. II. c. 5.

that

that I need not aſſign any. I cannot, therefore, but wonder at the prepoſterous Artifice of ſome Writers, who ſhew the Cataſtrophe of a Play, in the very Title of it. We have an *Engliſh* Tragedy, truly excellent in all other Reſpects, entitul'd, *Venice Preſerv'd; or the Plot diſcover'd.* How much better would this have become the laſt Page, than the firſt? Here one may apply the Words of a late ingenious Poet of our own, tho' in a little different Senſe[z]:

Veſtibulum ante ipſum, primoque in limine, FINIS *Scribitur*

Too ſoon, undoubtedly, for the Author's Reputation, is *Venice preſerv'd*; too ſoon *the Plot diſcover'd*, for the Reader's Diverſion.

To theſe three Parts of the Drama, *Scaliger* adds a fourth; *viz.* the *Cataſtaſis*, which he defines to be[a], *The full Growth of the Fable, while Things are at a Stand in that Confuſion to which the Poet has brought them.* But I can't ſee how this differs from *Epitaſis*, in which, according to his own Definition, *all Things appear involv'd in Confuſion, or Uncertainty.*

What the Moderns call *Incidents*, are ſuch Events as ſtart up of a ſudden in the Courſe of the *Drama*, that are concomitant to the main Deſign, and conduce to the bringing on the *Cataſtrophe*, and yet are not of ſo great Moment as to conſtitute diſtinct, or even ſubordinate Actions. Theſe are very ſerviceable in exciting Admiration; and the niceſt Art is ſhewn in the proper Conduct of them to that Purpoſe.

There's one Fault, which both ancient and modern Writers are often guilty of, *viz.* of introducing entire Scenes, or the greateſt Part of them, only that

[z] Auctio Daviſiana. [a] Poet. L. I. c. 9.

the Actors may have an Opportunity of making ſome fine Speeches, and the Authors of ſhewing their Wit; without contributing, in the leaſt, to the main Buſineſs of the Drama: Whereas, in Truth, no Scene, of any Length, ought to be writ only for Decoration. There may, nay, muſt be many ornamental Parts; but no conſiderable one ſhould be *nothing elſe* but Ornament. As, in Architecture, ſumptuous Edifices are embelliſh'd with Entablatures, Relievo's, and Sculpture; but no Part of them, of any Bulk, or Weight, ſhould be added, for nothing elſe but Embelliſhment. The Reaſon is, becauſe the very Eſſence of Beauty conſiſts in a genuine Simplicity; ſuch as Nature ſhews in the wonderful Syſtem of the Univerſe.

Among the Moderns, the chief, almoſt the only Subject of Tragedy, as well as Comedy, is *Love*; not ſo with the Ancients, who ſeem, in this Particular, to have judg'd better than we do. For tho' it muſt be allow'd *Love* is the moſt prevailing Paſſion of human Nature, and the great Buſineſſes of the World, both public and private, are chiefly govern'd by it; yet there are others, as Ambition, and Friendſhip, to name no more, which may either ſingly, or jointly, be the proper Subject of the Drama; tho' I own its Progreſs would be much facilitated, if predominant *Love* interven'd to accelerate the Springs of Action. This Paſſion, like the *Primum Mobile* in the ancient Syſtem, drives round the leſſer Fires, as ſo many Stars, within its own *Vortex*; and is, therefore, by its active Power, far the moſt productive of Thoughts, Words, and Events; and the beſt adapted to excite Pleaſure and Admiration. But, for that Reaſon, as it is an Attempt the moſt difficult, ſo is it the moſt noble, to pleaſe an Audience without this Ingredient, which both the Ancients and Moderns have ſometimes very happily effected. All *Terence's*

Comedies

Comedies are upon the Subject of Love; not ſo thoſe of *Ariſtophanes*: But, among the Moderns, I have not ſeen one without it. Tragedies there are many, abſolutely free from it, eſpecially ancient ones; as thoſe of *Sophocles*, and *Euripides*, which are adapted to infuſe Terror, rather than Compaſſion; and don't ſo much aim at appearing ſoft and delicate, as grand and magnificent. And among the Moderns, eſpecially our Countrymen, we have the Tragedies of *Sejanus*, *Catiline*, and *Julius Cæſar*, to name no more, who all meet their Fate without any Love to haſten it. But the Poets of the preſent, and foregoing Age, are full of Love, not only in their Tragedies and Comedies, but in every other Compoſition: That of *Terence*, tho' in a different Senſe, may be applied to each of them, *amore abundas*; they *abound with Love*, or rather run over with it. But more of this, perhaps, when we come to ſpeak of Tragedy and Comedy diſtinctly.

To the ſame Place I muſt likewiſe poſtpone, what remains to be ſaid of the *Chorus* of the Ancients; for this, as I once before hinted, they added over an above to the *Protaſis*, *Epitaſis*, and *Cataſtrophe*. I paſs it over here, becauſe it is not, like thoſe I have now treated of, an eſſential Part of the Drama, and is totally laid aſide by the Moderns, in my Opinion very deſervedly. I ſhall, however, make ſome Obſervations upon it, in a proper Place, ſince it made a Part of the old Comedy, and was continu'd in all the Tragedies of the Ancients.

Nor ſhall I here draw a Compariſon between the ancient dramatic Writers and the Moderns; this I ſhall attempt in the diſtinct Diſſertations that are to follow. I would only obſerve, in a Word, that as we have more bad Plays than they, ſo have we more that are truly beautiful; they have fewer that deſerve

Cenſure, and fewer that merit Praiſe; they more correct, we ſtrike out into brighter Excellencies.

Thus much may ſuffice to explain the Definition we at firſt laid down, of a dramatic Performance, except what relates to the laſt Clauſe of it, that it is form'd *for the Delight and Improvement of Mankind.* Of the firſt, *viz. the Delight*, I have ſaid enough already: And as to *Improvement*, it ought to be the End of all Poetry in general, but of the *Drama* more particularly, whoſe Buſineſs it is to ſet before our Eyes the different Courſes of Life; the Virtues and Vices, Happineſs and Miſery, that attend Mankind in each of them. The Drama is ſo exact a Picture of Human Life, that ſometimes we are ſaid to copy That; according to that noted Saying, *Totus mundus agit Hiſtrioniam*; *The World is but a theatrical Entertainment:* Which Compariſon is beautifully carried on by *Lucian* in his Dialogue, entituled, Χάρων, or Ἐπισκοπῆς. It ought, therefore, to be an invariable Rule, which is but ſometimes follow'd, to direct the Plot to ſome moral End, and upon winding up the Cataſtrophe, to leave it upon the Audience with ſome uſeful Precept. How little this has been obſerv'd, by the Poets of the laſt and preſent Age, I am aſham'd to ſay; moſt of whoſe Writings, but Comedies in particular, are ſo full of Filth and Obſcenities, that, far from ſerving the Cauſe of Virtue, they are the very Panders of Luſt and Impurities. I could wiſh to ſee ſome Remedy applied to ſo great an Evil. In the mean Time, let all good Men ſhun the Contagion; and let not the Infamy of it fall upon Poetry itſelf, but upon her impure Profeſſors.

LECTURE

LECTURE XXIII, &c.

Of COMEDY.

HAVING diſcours'd of the Nature and Genius of the Drama in general; the three great Unities, *viz.* of *Action*, *Time*, and *Place*; the Variety, and Diſtinctneſs of the Characters; the Contrivance and Management of the Plot, and other Things of that Sort; Comedy comes next to be conſider'd ſeparately, as it falls under the general Rules of the *Drama* which are already mention'd, and as it is diſtinguiſh'd from Tragedy, which ſhall be treated of hereafter.

The Word *Comedy* is deriv'd from κώμη, *a Village*, and ᾠδὴ, *a Song*; becauſe, conſiſting only of a *Chorus*, and fram'd without Dialogue or Diverſity of Characters, it was ſung originally in *Villages*, and was therefore call'd a *Country Catch*; its firſt Appearance being entirely different from that Dreſs, which it afterwards aſſum'd, and ſtill continues to wear: Or it was call'd Comedy from κῶμος and ᾠδὴ, becauſe at Feaſts (which were under the Care of the God *Comus*) it was uſually one Part of the Entertainment.

When or where *Comic* Poetry had its Original, is a Queſtion not to be determin'd, which *Ariſtotle* accounts for in this Manner; [b] Αἱ μὲν οὖν ἀπ' ἀρχῆς τραγῳδίαι

[b] Περὶ Ποιητικῆς, c. V.

μεταβάσεις, καὶ δι' ὧν ἐγένετο, οὐ λελήθασιν. Ἡ δὲ κωμῳδία, διὰ τὸ μὴ σπουδάζεσθαι ἐξ ἀρχῆς, ἔλαθεν. *We are acquainted* (says he) *with the Alterations and Improvements made in Tragedy, and with the Authors of them; but Comedy, becauſe leſs Regard was paid to it at firſt, we know little or nothing of.* The Dignity of Tragic Poetry was the Reaſon why the *Greeks* began to improve it much earlier, and to take more Pains in it, and therefore its Riſe and Progreſs is much better known. But altho' Tragedy was ſooner refin'd, and brought under the Rules of Art, yet it is probable, that ſome rude Attempts in Comedy were more ancient: Becauſe it ſeems natural to imagine, that Mankind, upon gathering in the Fruits of the Earth, and receiving the other Bleſſings of Providence, ſhould be excited with Sentiments of Joy, affected with an innocent Gaiety, and led on to ſome feſtival Sports, before they could think of writing Poems upon the Miſeries and Misfortunes of other Men; and becauſe a Life plain, and without Shew, was more ancient than State and Magnificence *.

Before I divide my Subject, I ſhou'd now, according to the Rules of Method, define it, which I wou'd comply with, if the ſeveral Parts of it wou'd properly fall under any one Definition, that wou'd

* As to the prior Antiquity of Comedy or Tragedy, Hiſtory muſt be our only Guide; for I think it cannot be ſuppos'd that either of them exiſted, before Mankind knew what State and Magnificence was. Both had their Riſe from the Songs at the Feaſts of *Bacchus*. *Suſarion* is ſaid to be the Inventor of the firſt, and *Theſpis* of the latter. So *Marm. Arundel. &c.* And yet *Horace* ſays, *Succeſſit vetus his Comœdia*, having ſpoken before of Tragedy and Satire; which is reconcil'd by ſuppoſing *Epicharmus* (who liv'd later than *Theſpis*) the *Inventor* of Comedy in *Horace*'s Judgment, becauſe he was the firſt *Writer* of it. See *Bentley*'s *Anſwer to Boyle*, p. 238, 199, 200.

equally

equally extend to all of them. But as there were three Sorts of Comedy, and the Definition, which I propoſe to give, takes in only the two laſt and beſt of them, which are now in Uſe, it may be proper to obſerve, before I offer any Definition, that theſe three Sorts of Comedy were the *Old*, the *Middle*, and the *New*.

The *old* was of two Kinds, 1. There was the very oldeſt of all, of which not the leaſt Remains are now left; but the Writers of it, as *Ariſtotle* tells us, were *Epicharmus* and *Phormis*, *Sicilians*; and *Crates* the *Athenian*. Their Performances were rough and artleſs, innocent and ſententious. 2. There was, what we now more expreſly call the *old* Comedy; the Maſters in which were *Eupolis* and *Cratinus*, whoſe Works are loſt, and *Ariſtophanes*, who was the laſt in that Way of Writing. It was ſharp, and ſatirical, and extremely abuſive; even Men of the firſt Rank, whether the Facts were true or falſe, if they were ſuſpected only of any criminal Behaviour, were brought upon the Stage without any Diſguiſe, call'd by their own Names, and us'd as ſeverely as poſſible. This is what *Horace* alludes to in one of his Satires:

[e] *Eupolis, atque Cratinus, Ariſtophaneſque Poëtæ,*
Atque alii, quorum Comœdia priſca virorum eſt,
Si quis dignus erat deſcribi, quod malus, aut fur,
Aut mœchus foret, aut ſicarius, aut alioqui
Famoſus, multa cum libertate notabant.

Cratin and *Eupolis*, that laſh'd the Age,
Thoſe old Comedian Furies of the Stage;
If they were to deſcribe a vile, unjuſt,
And cheating Knave, or ſcourge a lawleſs Luſt,

[e] Lib. 1. Sat. IV. ℣ 1.

Or other Crimes; regardleſs of his Fame,
They ſhew'd the Man, and boldly told his Name.
Creech.

Dignus erat deſcribi, deſerv'd to be expos'd, *i.e.* in the Poet's Opinion; for we are not to imagine, that all Perſons who underwent that theatrical Diſcipline, did really deſerve it: It is well known, how ill *Ariſtophanes* us'd the very beſt of the *Athenians*, the almoſt divine *Socrates*. Beſides, it might, and probably did often happen, that a Man who had in Juſtice deſerv'd Correction, might be too much a Sufferer in the Meaſure of it. But, however, to point its Satire in plain Terms againſt the greateſt Men, and the greateſt Crimes, was a Liberty which this old Comedy aſſum'd; an unreaſonable Liberty upon all Accounts, and not to be endur'd. For Men of the firſt Rank, and Crimes of the blackeſt Die, are not the proper Characters or Objects of Comedy, as will be ſhewn more at large hereafter: And in writing Satire directly to name Men, whatſoever Rank they are of, is inconſiſtent with all the ſober Rules of Poetry: As, in the Comedy of the *Clouds*, *Ariſtophanes* brings *Socrates* upon the Stage by Name, as one of the Perſons of the *Drama*. Indeed, this Liberty of Abuſe and Defamation, was allow'd chiefly to the *Chorus*, and was moſt in Uſe during the Democracy of the *Athenians*, eſpecially in the Time of the *Peloponneſian* War. But when the Thirty Tyrants had ſeiz'd the Government, they thought proper to make a Law againſt it. This *Horace* ſpeaks of, in his Art of Poetry:

[d] *Succeſſit vetus his Comœdia, non ſine multa Laude; ſed in vitium libertas excidit, & vim Dignam lege regi; Lex eſt accepta, Choruſque Turpiter obticuit, ſublato jure nocendi.*

[d] ℣ 281.

Next

Next theſe, old Comedy did pleaſe the Age,
But ſoon their Liberty was turn'd to Rage;
Such Rage, as Civil Pow'r was forc'd to tame,
And by good Laws ſecure Men's injur'd Fame.
Thus was the *Chorus* loſt, their railing Muſe
Grew ſilent, when forbidden to abuſe. *Creech.*

The moſt learned *Gerrard Voſſius* has oblig'd us with ſo good an Account of the Riſe and Progreſs of the two other Sorts of Comedy, I mentioned, that I am capable of giving it no Improvements; it is as follows: [e] "The Government, for fear of being too freely us'd, took away the Chorus, which was generally extreamly abuſive. Inſtead of it, ſucceeded παρεκβάσεις, or Digreſſions, which, like the old *Chorus*, were Breaks in the Action, but deſign'd chiefly to cenſure or expoſe the Poets: If any other Perſons were ſtruck at, it was not done rudely, but in a modeſt and decent Manner. The Vices of all the Citizens, were, without Exception, brought under the Laſh, but no Body was nam'd: Or if any particular Perſon was pointed at, it was covertly, and in Diſguiſe. And this Sort of Comedy, after the third was invented, was call'd the *Middle* Comedy; introduc'd between the Old and New, but had a greater Reſemblance with the Old. The moſt celebrated Authors of this Middle Comedy at *Athens*, were *Philiſcus* and *Stephanus*; as is mention'd in the *Prolegomena* to *Ariſtophanes*. It was a Rule with them to name no Body, but Gentlemen of their own Profeſſion; a Liberty which others were very willing to allow them: In this, alone, they follow'd the Old Comedy, which did the ſame Thing." Moſt, if not all the modern Comedies, are of this Sort, except in the laſt Particular, eſpecially thoſe of our own

[e] Inſt. L. II. c. 27. p. 139, 140.

Country;

Country; as will be very evident, from what we have to offer upon this Subject hereafter. Such, then, was the *Middle* Comedy, and was ſucceeded by the *New*, which we have the Hiſtory of from the ſame Hand.

" Afterwards, in the Reign of *Alexander the* " *Great*, to expoſe the Vices of great Men, even " without naming them, was look'd upon as an Of- " fence to the Government. Comedy, by this " Means, entirely loſt its ancient Privilege of Cor- " rection, and a new Way of Writing was intro- " duc'd, to work up an imaginary Story, and inſtead " of *Chorus's*, or *Digreſſions*, to make Uſe of Pro- " logues." *Voſſius* then gives us a long Account of the Writers of this new Comedy, which we don't think proper to repeat; and obſerves, " That *Me-* " *nander's* Character was univerſally allow'd to be " ſuperior to all of them. In theſe Comedies the " Liberty of Scandal, and all the Bitterneſs of Abuſe, " was in great Meaſure laid aſide: The *Chorus* (as " before obſerv'd) was entirely dropp'd, and the " new Invention, *Prologue*, now ſucceeded. Co- " medy, at its firſt Appearance, was nothing elſe " but a *Chorus*; afterwards, Variety of Perſons and " Characters were introduc'd, and the *Chorus* taken " away: So that it was firſt of all a *Chorus* only, " without Dialogue; and then Dialogue, without a " *Chorus*. This new Comedy differ'd very much " from the old; the Plots in the old Comedy were " chiefly taken from real Stories, in this always from " fictitious ones; that was abuſive, this had its " pointed Satire, but no ſcandalous and unmannerly " Reflections. Nor were the Parts of it divided in " the ſame Manner, or into the ſame Number of " Acts. There was a great Variety of Meaſures in " the old Comedy, but only *Trochaic*, or *Iambic*, in " the new: And, laſtly, the Style of this was more

" correct

" correct and elegant than the old, whoſe Lan-
" guage, as it was more elevated, ſo was it leſs re-
" gular and uniform." This new Comedy was the only Sort that ever appear'd upon the *Roman* Stage, introduc'd thither by *Livius Andronicus*, the Author of Dramatic Poetry among the *Romans*. *Plautus* and *Terence* proceeded upon the ſame Plan, eſpecially *Terence*; for *Plautus*'s Way of Writing has a greater Reſemblance of the *Middle* Comedy. And therefore, tho' *Ariſtophanes*, conſidering when he liv'd, and the Nature of his Poetry, was ſo much, and ſo juſtly celebrated; yet, rejecting utterly the old Comedy, the two laſt Sorts are ſuch only as ought to be included in the general Idea of Comic Poetry: Or, perhaps, by uniting both the laſt together, a juſt Notion of Comedy may be better form'd, which, I think, may be defin'd in this Manner: *Comedy is a Sort of Dramatic Poetry, which gives a View of common and private Life, recommends Virtue, and expoſes the Vices and Follies of Mankind in a humorous and merry Way of Writing.*

This Idea of Comedy, is what ariſes rather from joining both Sorts together, than what properly belongs to either of them: For neither, taken ſeparately, come up to it. Virtue had not its juſt Commendation in the *Middle* Comedy, nor Vice its due Correction in the *New:* There was too much Mirth in one, and Gravity in the other. This, therefore, is the Definition of a perfect Comedy, not as it *always*, or indeed *generally is*, but as it is *ſometimes*, and *always ought* to be. " Comedy (ſays *Voſſius*) is " divided by ſome *Greek* and *Roman* Critics into the " *Moral* and the *Merry:* The firſt gives a natural " and ſober View of common Life; the other is all " over Pleaſantry and Ridicule." And this was undoubtedly a very convenient Diviſion, becauſe it takes the Caſe as it really is. Of the firſt Kind, are *Terence*'s Comedies,

Comedies, of the laſt *Plautus's*: But both of them had been more perfect, if they had fallen a little more into each other's Way of Writing; if *Terence* had endeavour'd more to make us laugh, and *Plautus* to be more ſerious.

Comedy is defin'd by *Scaliger*[f], to be *a Dramatic Poem, repreſenting the Buſineſs of Life, whoſe Event is fortunate, and Style familiar.* But to repreſent the Buſineſs of Life, belongs to the *Drama* in general, and may equally be applied to Tragedy or Comedy; and therefore ought not to make Part of the diſtinguiſhing Character of either of them. Comedy, indeed, ought always to end fortunately, and the Style ſhould be familiar: But both theſe are included under that Branch of our Definition which ſays, it muſt be *in a humorous or facetious Way of Writing.* Mirth and Raillery, tho' eſſential to this Sort of Poetry, are not taken Notice of in *Scaliger*'s Definition, and, in *Voſſius*'s Opinion[g], are not at all neceſſary in the Idea of it. But is it poſſible to have any Notion of Comedy, where Mirth and Humour have no Place in it? *Scaliger* ſays, in another Place[h], tho' not very conſiſtently, that it was common, both in Tragedy and Comedy, to have the Play ſometimes *conclude with a Mixture of Grief and Gladneſs.* He ſeems to have forgot his own Definition of Comedy, where he would have it always *end ſucceſsfully.* He mentions, indeed, many Comedies[i], *where there is a Mixture of Mirth and Sorrow in them*; and the Obſervation might have been as true of all the reſt. For it is ſcarce, if at all poſſible, that all the Perſons concern'd in an Action ſhould rejoice in the moſt fortunate and ſucceſsful Concluſion of it; becauſe, where-ever any Emulation or Competition

[f] Poetic. L. I. c. V. p. 27. [g] P. 123.
[h] P. 45, & 367. [i] P. 45.

riſes,

riſes, it is impoſſible that every Body ſhould ſucceed: And were it poſſible, it would be improper; for Vice ſhould always receive its Puniſhment, and Virtue its Reward. It is therefore to no Purpoſe to give us the Inſtances of *Thraſo* in *Terence's Eunuch*, of *Chremes* in his *Phormio*, or of others, who at the End of the Play go off in ſome Concern. For (not to obſerve that their Sorrow is very much ſoften'd in the Concluſion) to make the Event proſperous, it is enough, that in general, and in the main Point, it turns out ſucceſsfully, and that all the Audience, tho' not all the Perſons concern'd in the Action, are diſmiſs'd in good Humour. What *Scaliger* ſays of Tragedies, (which we ſhall ſpeak of hereafter) is very true, that the *Cataſtrophe* neither is, nor always ought to be unfortunate. But certainly a Comedy ought always to end chearfully. And this may ſerve, by way of Anſwer, to what *Voſſius* has obſerv'd about the double *Cataſtrophe* of ſome Comedies, which, with regard to different Perſons, *are joyful and unfortunate*[k].

Voſſius defines Comedy in this Manner, [l] *A Dramatic Poem, copying the Actions of the principal Citizens, and common People, in a familiar Style, not without Mirth and Raillery.* He therefore manifeſtly contradicts * himſelf, when he affirms, afterwards, that Mirth is not *eſſential to Comedy*. Having given us this Definition, he proceeds thus: "But if we "conſider Comedy, as it *has generally been* written, "we might call it, *a Repreſentation not only of pub-* "*lic, but private Life.*" Yes, truly, if we conſider

[k] P. 125. [l] P. 110.

* No more than he himſelf was aware. He obſerves, if, as St. *Jerome* ſays, it is a Copy of common Life, for the Improvement of the Audience, it need not be mix'd with Mirth, were it not for the Sake of pleaſing them.

Com edy

Comedy as it *ought to* be written, we may venture to ſay, that it is a Copy of the Actions of *private Men*, and not of the chief *Magiſtrates*. For by the Actions of the *principal Citizens* * he means (as it appears plainly afterwards) thoſe, who are concern'd in the Government, and in the Adminiſtration of Public Affairs, which are by no Means a proper Subject for Comedy.

Twenty-fourth Lecture.

But we ſaid Comedy was a View of *common and private Life:* Not that the lower Sort of People only are to be repreſented in it; for Gentlemen, and even Nobility, not only may, but ought ſometimes to be introduc'd, if they do not appear in a public Character; but by no Means Princes, or Monarchs, or even Perſons of lower Station in Government, as concern'd in public Affairs; Circumſtances which are proper for Tragedy, not at all for Comedy. Much leſs ſhould a Deity be introduc'd; for which Reaſon, *Ariſtophanes*, in his *Plutus*, and *Plautus*, in his *Amphitryo*, break thro' the Rules of Comic Poetry, by bringing *Jupiter* and *Mercury*, and other Deities, upon the Stage. There is, indeed, as Comedy has been manag'd, two Sorts of it, the *Genteel*, and the *Low*; the one conſiſting of Perſons of Character and inferior Life both together; the other of the Vulgar only; and is not properly Comedy, but Farce, nor ſo ſuitable to my Definition of it. For this gives a View but of *one Side* of private Life, and that the leaſt creditable. Nor yet are Perſons of Condition only to be repreſented, becauſe we ſhould ſtill ſee but *one*, tho' the better Side of Life; and becauſe by this Means we ſhould want Mirth and Raillery, and the true Comic Spirit;

* *Voſſius* takes Care to tell us, that this Definition is ſuited to the Old Comedy; and gives us others from *Camerarius* and *Jul. Scaliger*, that comprehend the New.

which

which are all beſt kept up by Perſons of low Degree, or rather by a mix'd Converſation between thoſe of different Circumſtances. Thus *Terence*, who, in *Cæſar*'s Opinion, wanted ſomewhat of this *Vis Comica*, would have had ſcarce any of it, if we had been entertain'd only with the grave Appearance of his *Chremeſes* and *Simo's*, *Phædria's* and *Antipho's*; and all the lower Characters of *Davus*, *Parmeno*, or *Geta*, and ſuch merry Fellows had been omitted.

An Image of common and private Life takes in the Virtues, Vices, and Follies of Mankind; and repreſents them in their true Colours; Virtue as amiable, Vice as odious, and Folly as ridiculous. Nor does this at all contradict that Definition of Comedy, which *Ariſtotle* has given; where he ſeems to determine, that whatſoever is truly valuable, and worthy of Commendation, is by no means a proper Subject for Comedy. [m] Ἡ δὲ κωμῳδία, ἐστὶν, ὥσπερ εἴπομεν, μίμησις φαυλοτέρων μὲν, ὑ μέντοι κατὰ πᾶσαν κακίαν, ἀλλὰ, τῦ αἰσχρῦ ἐστι τὸ γελοῖον μόριον. *Comedy, as we ſaid, is an Imitation of the worſe Part of Mankind, but not thro' all the Enormities of Vice; for it is only ſome Degree of it that is ridiculous.* In this Definition, *Ariſtotle*, according to his uſual Manner, gives a ſhort and ſuccinct Account of his Subject, not a full and perfect Explication of it. And I may venture to ſay, that I have offer'd nothing that is inconſiſtent with this Deſcription, by affirming that *Virtue*, as well as *Vice* and *Folly*, is a proper Subject for Comedy. For when he tells us, that the Characters in Comedy are to be copied from the more ignominious Part of Mankind, he does not ſay, they are to be copied from them *only:* Nor does he mean, that none elſe are to be

[m] De Poetica, cap. V.

repre-

repreſented in it, but that none elſe are to be *expos'd*, and turn'd to *Ridicule*. And Vices will always appear the more odious and ridiculous, when they are plac'd in full Light againſt their oppoſite Virtues.

Monſ. *Dacier*, who has given us a Tranſlation, and Notes upon this Part of *Ariſtotle*, affirms, that *Ridicule is the only Subject of Comedy* [a]; which is neither true in Fact, nor agreeable to his Author's Meaning. I am ſenſible that the *chief* Buſineſs of Comedy is Ridicule, but not the *only* one. *Ariſtotle* intimates, indeed, what we not only grant, but contend for, that great and ſcandalous Enormities, as they raiſe ſome Degree of Horror in our Minds, and are proper for Tragedy, are not ſo for Comic Writers But they may bring leſſer Failings upon the Stage, and perhaps ſome which are rather odious than ridiculous: Nor does that great Philoſopher advance any Thing to the contrary: For in thoſe Words, ἀλλὰ τῦ αἰσχρῦ ἐϛι τὸ γελοῖον μόριον, he only ſhews, what we readily allow, that the *chief* Subject of Comedy is Ridicule: And he plainly inſinuates, that ſcandalous and great Crimes are not proper for it, when he defines it *an Imitation of the worſe Part of Mankind, but not practiſing every Kind of Vice.* And yet Monſ. *Dacier* defends *Ariſtophanes*, and other Writers of the old Comedy, who (as *Horace* obſerves, in the Verſes before mention'd) expos'd the worſt Sort of Crimes upon the Stage, tho' he inſiſts, at the ſame Time, that nothing is to be admitted in Comedy, but what is the Subject of Ridicule. He attempts, indeed, to reconcile their Practice with this Opinion, by obſerving, that thoſe old Poets painted even the greateſt Enormities in that Light which made them rather ridiculous than deteſtable, and that the

[a] In Poet. Ariſt. p. 58, 59.

Audience

Audience were to conſider them only in that View: But it is very evident, that horrid and abominable Vices (ſuch were ſome of thoſe which *Horace* mentions, and theſe Writers expos'd) as Murder, for Inſtance, can by *no ſort* of Colouring be ridiculous, nor, in the Nature of Things, become the Object of Jeſt and Merriment. I own there may be ſome Circumſtances attending the greateſt Crimes, which may excite rather Contempt or Laughter, than Horror or Deteſtation; as may be obſerv'd in the Inſtances of *Theft* and *Adultery*, which *Horace* mentions: Nor do I deny, that, *in this View*, they may have a Place in Comedy, provided they are but ſeldom, and with great Caution, repreſented: Tho', notwithſtanding all the Caution that is poſſible, they had better be omitted. For, upon *the whole*, all Things conſider'd, ſuch Actions are ſhocking, and can never be ſo truly ridiculous, as they are deteſtable. However, to let them make the moſt of this Conceſſion, it can never be admitted as an Excuſe for thoſe Poets who repreſent Things and Perſons as ridiculous, which are in no Reſpect whatever the Objects of Ridicule. I mention Perſons, as well as Things: For Monſ. *Dacier* defends *Plautus* for introducing Kings and Gods upon the Stage in his *Amphitryo*, and yet, notwithſtanding, pronounces it to be true Comedy, for this Reaſon, forſooth, becauſe *the Subject* (ſays he) *in itſelf tragical, is by the Poet turn'd into Ridicule.* Which is ſo far from being a juſt Vindication of him, that it is the very Fault he ſtands accus'd of. For what is this, but inverting the very Nature of Things? It is not *Poetry*, but *Buffoonry*; nor can the Author of ſuch Dramatic Performances be conſider'd as a *Poet*, but a *Droll*. Such Prodigies may poſſibly occaſion a Laugh among the Vulgar, who think nothing *marvellous*, but what is *monſtrous*; but Men of Taſte, and Judgment, will always treat them with Contempt

Contempt and Averſion. To return, then, from Perſons to Things. If we reſtrain Comedy from meddling with enormous Vices, do we not ſeem to contradict *Horace*'s Judgment, who ſays,

[a] —— *Ridiculum acri*
Fortius & melius magnas plerumque ſecat res:
Illi, ſcripta quibus Comœdia priſca viris eſt,
Hoc ſtabant, hoc ſunt imitandi.
Great Faults are rounded off with oily Sneer,
Not mall'able by Strokes the moſt ſevere.
This was the Drift of all thoſe ancient Plays,
In this they may be follow'd, and with Praiſe.

Great Faults may, I own, but not the *greateſt: Follies* the greateſt, if you will, and ſometimes great *Crimes*, which (as was obſerv'd before) may have ſomething ridiculous in the Manner of their Commiſſion. Nor did the Writers of the old Comedy *always* expoſe the greateſt Crimes, but Crimes of a leſs Note, and Follies of the firſt Magnitude, and are in *this Reſpect worthy of Imitation*. But notwithſtanding the ingenious and refin'd Obſervations of the *French* Tranſlator, *Ariſtotle*'s Rule will for ever ſtand in Oppoſition to his Sentiments, and exclude ſuch abominable Characters from being introduc'd in Comedy, under Pretence of expoſing them. [b] Τὸ γάρ γελοῖόν ἐϛιν ἁμάρτημά τι, καὶ αἴσχος ἀνώδυνον, καὶ ὐ φθαρτικόν. Οἷον, εὐθὺς, τὸ γελοῖον πρόσωπον αἰσχρόν τι, καὶ διεϛραμμένον ἄνευ ὀδύνης. *What we laugh at, is only leſſer Failings, ſome Immorality that is not ſhocking, and attended with no fatal Conſequences: As, to uſe an obvious Inſtance, a ridiculous Face is ugly, and ill-ſhap'd, but without any Appearance of Calamity.* And is this Deſcription of

[a] L. I. Sat. X. ver. 14. [b] Cap. V.

Ridicule

Ridicule ever to be reconcil'd with the moſt heinous Crimes, ſuch as the Writers of the old Comedy have ſometimes expos'd? Do ſuch black Offences affect us with no Sorrow; are no fatal Conſequences occaſion'd by them? I don't then plead the Practice of theſe Poets againſt *Ariſtotle*'s Opinion, (which yet is a Difficulty Monſ. *Dacier* endeavours to guard againſt) but from the Nature and Reaſon of the Thing I arraign their Practice: Tho' were the Point to be decided by Authority, I ſhould always have a greater Reverence for the Judgment of *Ariſtotle*, than the Example of *Ariſtophanes*.

Crimes, then, of this Stamp, can never agree with Comedy; not that we are for running into the other Extream, and aſſerting (as I obſerv'd before) that Ridicule is the only, becauſe it is the principal Subject of it. *Inferior* Crimes, of the more *odious* Kind, may properly enough be introduc'd upon that very Account, becauſe they are *odious*: Tho' thoſe that are equally odious, and ridiculous, are much more *proper* for it; as Avarice, Arrogance, Superſtition, and the like. And others, of a different Turn, if repreſented in private Life, may, nay, ought to be expos'd on the Comic Stage, as Luxury, and the prepoſterous Affectation of appearing great without a Fortune, provided this is done in a merry Way, and the Humour is not loſt in the Diſcipline. But Murder, Rebellion, ambitious Thirſt of Power, and other Vices of that Strain, belong only to Tragedy. But the *Follies* of Mankind (as they are uſually term'd) that are not ſo much *Crimes*, as *Imperfections*, that offend againſt the Rules of *Decency* rather than *Morality*, are *merely*, and in *every View*, ridiculous; and, upon that Account, furniſh the *moſt proper* Matter for Comedy.

But here it is neceſſary to obſerve, that all the Virtues, Vices, and Follies, we have been ſpeaking of, take in the Paſſions of every Kind: For it is a very great

great Miſtake to imagine that Comedy ſhould be from one End to the other, a continu'd Scene of Gaiety and Mirth: Some Parts of it may be grave, ſententious, and even ſorrowful. Nor will any one, I believe, who is a Judge in this Way of Writing, ever find Fault with *Terence*, who, in the *Andria*, (to omit many other Paſſages) brings *Pamphilus* on the Stage under all this Concern.

[q] *Hoccine eſt humanum factum, aut inceptum? hoccine officium patris?*

Was there ever ſuch a Thing done, or thought of yet by Man? Is this the Tenderneſs of a Father?

And a little afterwards,

— Sed nunc quid primum exequar?
Tot me impediunt curæ, quæ meum animum divorſe trahunt:
Amor, miſericordia hujus, nuptiarum ſollicitatio,
Tum patris pudor, qui me tam leni paſſus eſt animo uſque adhuc
Quæ meo cunque animo libitum eſt facere; eine ego ut advorſer? hei mihi!
Incertum eſt quid agam.

But, as the Caſe now ſtands, where ſhall I begin firſt? So many Difficulties cumber and diſtract my Soul at once; on one Side, Love, Pity for that dear Creature, and the preſſing Importunities I am under to marry: On the other, the Reverence due to my Father, who has hitherto indulg'd me in all that Heart could wiſh; and ſhall I now turn Rebel to him at laſt? Mine is a wretched Situation; which Way to turn, I know not.

[q] Andria, Act. I. Scen. penult.

And

And tho' the Style of Comedy is generally familiar, yet it is ſometimes capable of the *Sublime*. So *Horace* obſerves, in his Art of Poetry:

[s] *Interdum tamen & vocem Comœdia tollit,*
Iratuſque Chremes tumido delitigat ore.

Yet Comedy ſometimes may raiſe her Voice,
And *Chremes* be allow'd to foam and rail. *Roſcom.*

Where Interpreters are of Opinion, that *Horace* alludes to that Paſſage in the *Heautontimorumenos:*

[t] *—— Non ſi ex capite ſis meo*
Natus, item ut aiunt Minervam eſſe ex Jove; ea cauſa magis
Patiar, Clitipho, flagitiis tuis me infamen fieri.

No! had you ſprung out of my very Brain, as they ſay *Pallas* did from *Jove's*, I wou'd not bear to ſee myſelf diſgrac'd by your Debauches.

But there is a wide Difference between that Diſtreſs, which prevails in Tragedy, and that which occaſionally appears in Comedy. The one is like a Storm in Winter, which covers the Sky all over with Clouds and Darkneſs, only a few tranſient Gleams of Light interſpers'd: The other is like a Summer's Day, which is generally ſerene and bright, and ſometimes, tho' ſeldom, a little over-caſt.

The whole Compaſs, then, of our Paſſions, may be repreſented in Comedy, as well as Tragedy; but in a *Manner* intirely different, on account of the Difference of the Characters from which they ariſe. For it is certainly true, on the one Hand, that the Foundations of human Happineſs and Miſery, all the Springs and Sources of our Affections, are, in the main, the ſame, and common to all Mankind: But, it is as evident, on the other, that every Man, ac-

[s] De Art. ℣ 93. [t] Act. V. Scen. IV. 12.

cording to his Station in Life, expreſſes thoſe Affections in a different Manner, and with peculiar Images. Thus, in a human Body, the ſeveral Parts are in all Men nearly the ſame; but the great Variety in their Condition, Education, and Ways of living, makes the ſame Variety in their Appearance, and gives a different Turn, even to their Countenance. A Monarch may be as merry as any of his Subjects; but how different is the Air of his Mirth, from that jovial Ruſticity with which the merry Peaſant overflows! A Shepherd, or Swain, may feel all the Anguiſh and Diſtreſs of Love; but how unlike are his Complaints to thoſe which a Prince or Sultan would pour out upon theſe Occaſions! Nay, and the loweſt Part of Mankind are not without *Ambition*; but how widely diſtant is it from the high and boundleſs Views with which Monarchs are affected!

But tho' every Paſſion may be properly repreſented in Comedy, yet the firſt Place muſt always be aſſign'd to Ridicule; that ſhould be, thro' the whole, the prevailing Turn. But how difficult it is for an Author to ſucceed in *juſt Ridicule*, is very obvious, not only to them who have attempted it, but to every Body who has duly conſider'd this Way of Writing. It is no eaſy Performance to rally the Follies of Mankind in an agreeable Manner; and to *laugh with a good Grace*, is no vulgar Attainment. But moſt of the Moderns ſeem to be quite of another Opinion, and think, that nothing is more eaſy, than to *make a Man ridiculous*. And it muſt be own'd, that *Laughing*, in their Way, is one of the eaſieſt Things imaginable, with whom a wry Face is a Joke, and every Joke a certain Mark of Wit: But *Horace* and *Terence* were unluckily of another Way of thinking. Our Witlings, whilſt they divert themſelves with the Follies of others, expoſe their own; and the Laughter they are ſo ready to raiſe, returns upon themſelves.

But, to ſay the Truth, our preſent Taſte for Ridicule is itſelf ridiculous, and that not only in Comedy, but many *other Compoſitions*, eſpecially in *Proſe*, which have met with great Approbation from many; with whom, to invert the Nature of Things, and miſrepreſent with trivial Geſtures, and low Mimickry, is reckon'd a Proof of a great Genius. Sometimes, indeed, there may be a great deal of Wit in this Sort of Burleſque, in deſcribing Heroes and great Actions in ludicrous and low Images, and ſetting off Trifles with the Air and Majeſty of the Sublime: But if this is coarſly done, the Compoſition languid, and over-run with Foppery, nothing is more nauſeous. To trifle in a ſprightly Manner, is exceeding pleaſant; but nothing more odious than an affected Dulneſs, and being downright fooliſh: Which is too often the Caſe with theſe Wits, who are wonderfully pleas'd with their own moſt ingenious Compoſitions; who are dealing perpetually in Ironies, and making Sport (as they imagine) with others. There is, indeed, a peculiar Beauty in an eaſy and well-turn'd Irony, which theſe toothleſs Snarlers know nothing of; but to utter a heavy and palpable Falſity, under the Shew of it, is mere Stupidity.

Res eſt ſevera voluptas ——

True Pleaſure's ſacred Name revere;
Itſelf is ſolid, and its Laws ſevere.

A Maxim, which, if all Writers would remember, the beſt Judges would be more agreeably entertain'd in reading them.

Twenty-fifth Lecture.

It may be ask'd, Whether Writers, who would profeſſedly expoſe the Follies and Vices of Mankind, ought to make their Figures larger than the Originals, or deſcribe them exactly as they are, without Addition or Improvement. Each Side of the Queſtion is not

without its Authorities. *Plautus* is alledg'd in Favour of the firſt Opinion, and *Terence* of the laſt. But granting that *Ariſtophanes* and *Plautus*, among the Ancients, and moſt of the modern Comic Writers, have taken too much Liberty in this Point; yet it is an allow'd Privilege to Poets, as well as Painters, not to be confin'd, either in Panegyric, or Satire, to the ſtrict Rules of Truth. Such Heightnings are no more than meer *Hyperboles*; nor do thoſe write, or theſe paint, *contrary* to Truth, but *above* it. The Strokes muſt be daring and ſtrong, if you would draw Men, or Characters, to the Life: It is not enough barely to draw the Outlines of Vice and Folly, if you intend to make the one ridiculous, or the other deteſtable; ſome Colourings muſt be added, both by the Painter, and the Poet.

Prologues were anciently made uſe of only before Comedies; but with us they are equally ſuited to them and Tragedy. They who have a Mind to know the ſeveral Sorts of them, may conſult *Voſſius*. The Ancients had no *Epilogue*, which is intirely modern, and us'd in common both to Tragedy or Comedy. *Terence*'s Prologues have no Wit, and very little Fancy in them; which cannot be ſaid of our Prologues and Epilogues, full, as they often are, of the moſt lively Entertainment.

They who wou'd be acquainted with the *Chorus*, the *Cantica*, and the *Pantomimes* of the Ancients, muſt conſult *Voſſius* and *Scaliger*, and ſuch Writers: For theſe Particulars belong rather to the Hiſtory of Poetry, than to any Branch of Critic. The Uſe of them, eſpecially the Pantomimes, was to relieve the Audience, that it might not grow weary of the Play: A Practice which can never be mention'd to their Honour: For it is a certain Evidence of a bad Taſte, when an Audience cannot bear to ſit out a dramatic Entertainment, without being reliev'd by ſuch

ſuch low Diverſions: But we have the leſs Reaſon to wonder at this, who have ſeen in our own Time and Nation, Rope and Ladder-Dancers, and other wonderful Artifts of that Claſs, not only admitted upon the Stage, but (to our Shame be it ſpoken) receiv'd there with the utmoſt Applauſe. The Age, indeed, even of *Auguſtus*, fell into much the ſame Depravity, which *Horace* [v] thus rallies for it:

[w] —— *Media inter carmina poſcunt*
Aut urſum, aut pugiles.
Let *Hockley-hole* Diverſions grace the Stage,
And Dog with Bear, *Stokes* with his Wife engage.

They, ſurely, muſt be of very low Genius, that cannot be content with a Comedy, unleſs it is diſgrac'd with ſomewhat lower, a ridiculous Farce.

From what we have ſaid of the Nature and Turn of this Kind of Poem, that it is a Repreſentation of common and private Life; ſome Perſons will, perhaps, imagine it to be a Work of Amuſement, compos'd without much Difficulty, or Genius. But this is ſo far from making it eaſier, that it increaſes the Difficulty of writing it. Take *Horace*'s Opinion,

[x] *Creditur, ex medio quia res arceſſit, habere*
Sudoris minimum; ſed habet Comœdia tanto
Plus oneris, quanto veniæ minus.
As Comedy takes all its Characters
From common Life, 'tis thought a Work of Eaſe;
Yet where the leſs Indulgence is allow'd,
The greater Pains and Judgment are requir'd.
Ch. Carthy.

Nor yet do we, therefore, affirm in general, that Comedy is a Work of greater Difficulty or Genius than Tragedy, which was the Opinion of *Antiphanes*, a

[v] Ad Auguſt. ℣ 185. [x] ℣ 168.

Comic Poet, as *Voſſius* tells us[y], whom the Reader may conſult for the Arguments and Replies on both Sides.

The Language of Comedy is by that learned Author[z] conſider'd in two Lights; in general, with regard to its Elegance; and more particularly, as it relates to the Stage. "As to Elegance, he ſays, that "the Language of *Ariſtophanes*, and other Writers "of the old *Greek* Comedy, was more correct and "beautiful than *Menander*'s, and other Writers of "the new. Among the *Latins*, *Terence*, for Beauty, "and Purity of Style, is ſuperior to all; *Plautus* is "honour'd but with the ſecond Place, tho', in *Var-*"*ro*'s Judgment, he deſerv'd the firſt." But no Body has been ſo indulgent to *Varro*'s Opinion, as to approve of it*. *Horace* thought very differently, whoſe Sentiments of *Plautus* appear from the Verſes already quoted. He proceeds, "If we conſider the "Language with regard to the *Drama*, it muſt be "ſuitable to the Subject, and not at all ſublime; but, "on the contrary, eaſy and familiar, and not ſet off "with too many Ornaments." It is needleſs to ſay more upon this Subject, becauſe I have already obſerv'd, in a former Lecture, that the Style of Comedy is not properly poetical, but an elegant Kind of Proſe.

The Names of the *Greek* Comic Poets have been taken Notice of already. Among the *Romans*, the moſt diſtinguiſh'd were two, whoſe Works are loſt, *Cæcilius*, and *Afranius*; and two, which we now

[y] Inſt. Poet. L. II. c. XXIV. [z] Ibid. c. XXV.

* *Lipſius* was of *Varro*'s Mind, who ſays, in a Letter to *A. Schottus*, *Terentium amo, admiror; ſed Plautum magis.* This blind Love for *Plautus*, led him into a ſtrange Affectation of his Style, for which he was expos'd by *Henry Stephens*, in his Book entitled, *De Lipſii Latinitate Polæſtra.*

have,

have, *Plautus*, and *Terence*. *Horace* has obſerv'd of them,

[z] *Vincere Cæcilius gravitate, Terentius arte.*
Compar'd in Character, *Cæcilius'* Part
Is Gravity, and *Terence's* is Art.

The latter Part of this Obſervation is clear and obvious, but what that Gravity was, in which *Cæcilius* excell'd *Terence*, and which itſelf ſeems in him to ſuperabound, is difficult to gueſs. By *Art*, ſays *Acro*, as *Voſſius* quotes him, is meant, the Propriety of Language, in which *Terence* was ſuperior to all other Poets. But I ſhould rather think, as *Voſſius* does, that by *Art* is meant the Management and Diſpoſition of the Plot; in which he far excell'd *Plautus* alſo. In Comedy, as the ſame learned Author obſerves, the *Romans* are much inferior to the *Greeks*; and he cites *Quintilian* * in Support of his Opinion, who has deliver'd his Thoughts of *Terence* with great Freedom. *Miratus ſæpius ego ſum, qui tanta fuerit populi Romani gravitas atque conſtantia, tantuſque latinæ dictionis amor, ut* Terentianis *fabulis capi potuerit; in quibus tam pauci riſus, uſque adeo rara ſcommata, &c. Sed agnoſco tempora: Vivebant tum Scipiones; Catoneſque erant in pretio: Et incrementa fiebant tum temporis illius imperii. Moribus populi in voluptatem prolabentibus, oratio facta eſt ſolutior.* "I have wonder'd," ſays he, (and I am no leſs ſurpriz'd at the Man's wonderful Way of Thinking) "that the *Ro-*
"*mans* ſhould have ſo much Gravity and Compo-
"ſure in their Tempers, ſuch a violent Affection
"for the Elegancies of their own Language, as to be
"fond of *Terence's* Plays, where there is ſo little
"Mirth, ſcarce a Joke to be found. But it was the
"Turn of that Age: The *Scipio's*, and *Cato's*, were

[z] Ad Aug. ℣ 59. * A Miſtake. *Voſſius*, L. II. c. XXIII. cites *Antonius Lullius Balearis* melioris notæ Rhet.

" their Men of Taſte, and in high Eſteem: They " were all Gravity, and their Thoughts ran only " upon Conqueſts, and Increaſe of Power. But as " the Morals of that People grew leſs ſevere, their " Writings had in them more Gaiety and Pleaſure." This is *Quintilian's* Opinion, as partial, as it is ſevere. The Verſes which *Cæſar* wrote upon *Terence*, and *Suetonius* has handed down to us, are ſo well known, that it might be thought an unpardonable Omiſſion, when we are treating upon this Subject, to take no Notice of them:

Tu quoque, tu in ſummis, ô dimidiate Menander,
Poneris, & merito, puri ſermonis amator;
Lenibus atque utinam dictis adjuncta foret vis
Comica, & æquato virtus polleret honore
Cum Græcis, neque in hac deſpectus parte jaceres:
Unum hoc maceror, & doleo tibi deeſſe, Terenti.

And thou, who mak'ſt *Mænander's* Beauties thine,
Shalt foremoſt in the Liſt of Writers ſhine;
Correct in Language, chaſte in ev'ry Thought,
In all the Rules of Art without a Fault.
Oh! did thy gently-pleaſing Scenes impart
As much the Force of Nature, as of Art,
Did but thoſe Strokes of Wit attend thy Lines,
Which thro' the *Grecian* Page diſtinguiſh'd ſhines,
Thy Works with Rapture wou'd be ſtudied o'er,
Nor *Roman* Elegance have wiſh'd for more.

But granting that *Terence* was no way remarkable for his Talent at Wit and Repartee, yet (with Submiſſion to ſo great a Judge) ſo ſharp and ſevere a Cenſure ſeems more than he deſerves. For there are many, and thoſe of the beſt Taſte, who are more pleas'd with a Writer, that perpetually keeps up an agreeable Smile, and an eaſy Chearfulneſs; than one, who

who is every now and then throwing them into Fits of Laughter, and violent Emotions.

Our modern Comedy, as I obſerv'd before, has a much greater Reſemblance with what the Ancients call'd the *Middle* Comedy, than either the *Old*, or *New*. It is much graver, and leſs ſatirical than the firſt, and has more delicate Touches of Wit and Raillery than the laſt. *Terence* ſeems neither by Genius, nor Inclination, to have had the leaſt Turn for the ſharp and ſatirical Way of Writing: His Excellency lies rather in copying the common Characters of Human Nature, and drawing them in the exacteſt Manner, and trueſt Light; than in painting any of its Extravagancies, whether in Vice, or Folly. The modern Comedies have certainly more Wit and Humour in their Compoſition, than the ancient; more Art in working up, and unravelling their Plots; and a greater Variety of Perſons concern'd in them: And eſpecially in genteel Comedy, our Characters have more good Breeding, and Politeneſs; and even in Low Life, our comical Figures are more ridiculous. But then, on the other Hand, the Language of *Terence* is more pure and correct, more expreſſive and elegant than ours: He has drawn his Characters more natural, and more accurately obſerv'd the Rules of Art. But to give the Moderns an abſolute Superiority in this Way of Writing, they have nothing more to do, than to prune and retrench ſome Excreſcencies, without ſtudying for any further Improvements: Let them abate of their Luxuriancy, and the Buſineſs is done at once. Nay, they ſeem to me already ſuperior to them in all other Reſpects, except (which I am aſham'd to own) in that intire Regard to Modeſty which is preſerv'd in all *Terence*'s Characters.

If we compare the modern Comic Writers in the ſeveral Parts of *Europe*, Monſ. *Rapin* tells us, that the *Spaniards* have one or two, but one, eſpecially, that is conſiderable; the *Italians* have none worth taking Notice of. The Diſpute, therefore, will lie betwixt the *French* and *Us*. And who has more Wit and Humour, is more elegant in Style, or natural in his Characters, than *Moliere*? Tho', in general, if we are not too partial to our own Performances, we are in this, as in all other Parts of Poetry, ſuperior to the *French*; but the Superiority is no where ſo diſputable.

As to our *Engliſh* Comedies, which are written in Proſe, if any over-nice Critic queſtions whether they can be juſtly reckon'd poetical Compoſitions, becauſe in the Definition of Poetry, which we have already given, ſome Sort of Numbers are made eſſential to it; the plain Anſwer is this: If we keep cloſe to the Terms of that Definition, our Comedies may juſtly be conſider'd as Poems, in every other Reſpect but this: The Definition is form'd upon the univerſal Practice of the Ancients, who are, and ought to be our great Maſters in this Art; and it is more reaſonable to continue, than alter it, in Compliance with the Practice of modern Writers. But the Queſtion, whatever Way it is determin'd, is only an idle Controverſy about Words, and of very little Moment: For the Verſes of the ancient Comedies differ'd ſo little from Proſe, that the niceſt Ear could not always diſtinguiſh them: They had their proper Meaſures, but ſo looſe and uncertain, that it is often difficult to determine which is the true Way of ſcanning them: And in Comedy more regular and confin'd Meaſures had been ridiculous. How inexcuſable, then, is the Practice of the *French* Poets, who have written whole Comedies in Rhyme, and Heroic Verſe? Rhymes are ridiculous enough in Tragedy; but

but that an eaſy and familiar Converſation, ſuch as Comedy is ſuppos'd to be, ſhould be all in Rhyme and Epic Verſe, has ſomething in it ſo extravagantly abſurd, that I am ſurpriz'd a Nation, ſo remarkable for Wit and good Senſe, could bear with it.

The Source of thoſe agreeable Reflections, that Comedy ſupplies us with, is ſo obvious, that it needs no Enquiry. Mirth is always pleaſing, and ſo is a lively Repreſentation of Human Nature, of the Incidents of common Life, and thoſe Characters which are every Day before us. Nor is the Cauſe of that ill-natur'd Pleaſure leſs eaſy to be aſſign'd, which ariſes from Satire, and Ridicule: Every Body is ſo civil to himſelf, as to ſuppoſe he is not the Perſon aim'd at. Who, upon theſe Occaſions, ever thinks of *Horace*'s Obſervation?

[a] —— *Quid rides? mutato nomine de Te*
Fabula narratur.

What, doſt thou laugh, and think that thou art free?
Fool, change the Name, the Story's told of thee.

The Images, then, of the Vices and Follies of other Men, flatter that Pride, which is too natural to Mankind; who are apt to think their own Characters rais'd, by the Ruin of others: This is ſuch a Pleaſure as we ought to be aſham'd of. But ſome there are, of a quite different Turn, who are as much delighted with the Moral of the Play, the Succeſs of Virtue, and the Puniſhments or Diſappointments which Vice meets with in it: And others have no Regard to any Character but the Poet's, are taken only with the Turns of Wit, and the Genius of the Writer. But *Errors* and *Imperfections* are the great Source of Delight in all Dramatical Performances, eſpecially in Comedy, which has, in general, more

[a] Lib. I. Sat. I. 69.

Friends and Admirers than Tragedy: Becauſe there are few Perſons of ſo great a Genius, or ſo refin'd a Taſte, as to be ſenſible of thoſe generous and agreeable Emotions, which ariſe from Tenderneſs, and Compaſſion, and even Diſtreſs itſelf. Scenes of Mirth are pleaſing to every Imagination, thoſe of Sorrow only to a few. I can only wiſh, that theſe different Paſſions which ariſe from the Gravity of Tragedy, or the Gaiety of Comedy, were made uſeful and inſtrumental to Virtue; and that our Theatres were not more frequented for the Amuſements they ſupply us with, than for the Leſſons of Morality and good Senſe inſtill'd in them.

LECTURE

LECTURE XXVI, &c.

Of TRAGEDY.

IN diſcourſing upon the Drama in general, I have already mention'd the Origin of Tragedy. The Word is deriv'd from τραγος, *a Goat*, and ωδη, *a Song*; becauſe a Goat was the Reward propos'd to the Competitors in this Art; as *Horace* has plainly intimated:

[b] *Carmine qui tragico vilem certavit ob hircum.*
The firſt Competitors in Tragic Strain,
When a poor Goat was all the Victor's Gain.

For they deſerve no Regard, who would derive τραγωδια, as if it were τρυγωδια, from τρυξ, *the Lees of Wine*; becauſe the Actors, before *Æſchylus* invented the Uſe of Masks, diſcolour'd their Faces with Wine Lees. This Etymology is harſh, and unnatural *; the other is eaſy, and agreeable to the Rules of Analogy, without changing ſo much as one Letter,

[b] De Art. Poet. ℣ 220.

* Another Reaſon againſt it is, that Τρυγωδια never ſignifies *Tragedy*, but *Comedy* only. *Caſaubon*, indeed, *de Satyr. Poeſi*, ſays, it originally comprehended both. But his Opinion depends ſolely on the *Etymolog. Mag.* which is contradicted by all the other Lexicographers. The Authorities

Letter, as the other does. [b] Their Opinion, who think it was call'd τραγῳδία, as if it were τραχεῖα ᾠδή, a *rough Song*; has ſtill leſs Countenance from the Analogy of that Language, or the Nature of the Poem. But it is not worth While to dwell upon theſe Trifles.

Ariſtotle, whoſe Diſcourſe on Poetry is employ'd chiefly on this Subject, defines Tragedy in this Manner, [c] Ἐστιν οὖν τραγῳδία μίμησις πράξεως σπουδαίας, καὶ τελείας, μέγεθος ἐχούσης, ἡδυσμένῳ λόγῳ, χωρὶς ἑκάστου τῶν εἰδῶν ἐν τοῖς μορίοις δρώντων, καὶ οὐ δι' ἀπαγγελίας, ἀλλὰ δι' ἐλέου, καὶ φόβου, περαίνουσα τὴν τῶν τοιούτων παθημάτων κάθαρσιν. *Tragedy is the Imitation of a ſerious, entire, and important Action, in an agreeable Style, the different Sorts of which Style muſt be regularly varied in the ſeveral Parts; and not by Narration, but by the Means of Terror and Pity purging the like Paſſions in us.* All I would obſerve of this Definition, at preſent, is, that there are two Parts of it which want ſome Explication. The firſt is, χωρὶς ἑκάστου τῶν εἰδῶν ἐν τοῖς μορίοις δρώντων; that is, ſays [d] *Voſſius*, "That the ſeveral Sorts of "Style ſhould not be mix'd together, but brought "in ſeparately in their ſeveral Parts. For *Ariſtotle* "adds, immediately after, *Some Parts are perform'd* "*in Metre only, ſome with Muſic* †." This Clauſe, therefore, of the Definition, can belong only to the

thorities he produces from *Ariſtotle* and *Athenæus*, make nothing for his Purpoſe. See *Bentley* againſt *Boyle*, p. 306, 307, 308. Which I mention the rather, becauſe the ingenious Mr. *Cruſius* has not in this, and ſome other Inſtances, profited by that learned Author's Obſervations.

[b] See *Voſſius* Inſt. Poet. L. II. c. XI.

[c] Περὶ Ποιητικῆς, cap. VI. [d] Inſt. Poet. L. II. c. XI.

† Beſides the Chorus, the Monologues, call'd *Cantica*, were ſet to Muſic; the Dialogues in a Kind of Recitative. See *Cruſius, ubi ſupra*, § IV.

ancient

ancient Tragedy, and not to our modern, which is entirely without a Chorus. The other Difficulty is, in δι' ἐπαγγελίας. *Voſſius* and *Dacier* are both of Opinion, that this Part of the Definition was added for no other Reaſon, but to diſtinguiſh Tragedy from Epic Poetry, which is form'd, not upon Action, but Narration. But ſtill there is a Doubt left, which neither of them attempt to clear up: Muſt we, therefore, exclude all Sort of Narration from Tragedy? Has not *Horace*, and all the Poets and Critics after him, made a proper Diſtinction between Things repreſented and related in the Drama?

[e] *Aut agitur res in ſcenis, aut acta refertur.*

Some Things are acted, others only told. *Roſcom.*

The Anſwer to which Queſtion, I think, is this; That there is undoubtedly a Dramatic Narration, but always related by ſome Perſons in the Play, not by the Poet himſelf, as in Epic Poetry; and this latter Sort of Narration is what *Ariſtotle* meant in the Definition before us. There is no Occaſion to explain the ſeveral Parts of it any further, ſince *Voſſius* has expreſs'd the Subſtance more clearly, and fully, in the following Definition. [f] *Tragedy is a Dramatic Poem, imitating ſome great, but unfortunate Event, in a grave and majeſtic Style:* To which, ſays he, if you pleaſe, you may add, *to raiſe the Paſſions, and purge the Mind from them.* All this is intelligible, and to the Point: But I wonder this learned Writer ſhould think the laſt Clauſe rather not impertinent, than eſſential, by that negligent Introduction, *that you may add it if you pleaſe*; which, as *Dacier* obſerves with great Judgment, is much the beſt Part of *Ariſtotle*'s Definition, and deſerves, of all others, to be moſt accurately explain'd. He ſhould alſo (as *Ariſtotle* has

[e] Art. Poet. ℣ 179. [f] Ibid.

done)

done) have particularly mention'd the two prevailing Paſſions of *Pity* and *Terror*, which are the proper Objects of Tragedy, and chiefly affected by it: And further, in Imitation of the ſame great Author, the Beauties of the Style ſhould not have been intirely forgot. I ſhall therefore, from theſe two Definitions, endeavour to form a third, much clearer than *Ariſtotle's*, and more compleat than *Voſſius's*. *Tragedy is a Dramatic Poem, imitating ſome great, but unfortunate Event, in a grave, majeſtic, and entertaining Style, to raiſe the Paſſions, eſpecially thoſe of Pity and Terror, and to purge the Mind of them.*

This Definition, expreſly, or by Implication, contains theſe ſeveral Parts; *the Argument, or the Subject Matter, the Sentiments, the Language and Verſification, the Characters and Manners, and, laſtly, the Moral, or the propos'd Effect.* All which agree in this, that they ought to be great and ſublime; for with Regard to all theſe, Tragedy is the nobleſt Kind of Poetry, except one.

The Subject is always ſome ſerious and important Event, as the Expulſion of a Tyrant, the Death of a Hero, and the like; which Event turns, and depends intirely upon ſome violent Paſſion, either good or bad; as Ambition, Revenge, Friendſhip, and eſpecially Love, (for Love, as I have before obſerv'd, is the chief Subject of the modern Drama, whether Tragedy, or Comedy;) or elſe upon the divine Juſtice, which gives either to Virtue, or Vice, or to both at once, their proper Retributions. It is likewiſe neceſſary, that the Manners, the Thoughts, the Language, (for theſe are ſo nearly allied, that they are much better conſider'd jointly, than ſeparately) ſhould be grave, ſublime, and magnificent. Hence *Horace*, in his Art of Poetry, after laying down Rules for the Style of Comedy,

Verſibus

[g] *Verſibus exponi tragicis res comica non vult,*

goes on thus,

Indignatur item privatis, & prope ſocco
Dignis carminibus narrari cœna Thyeſtæ.

A Comic Subject loves an humble Verſe:
Thyeſtes ſcorns a low and Comic Style. *Roſcom.*

And again:

[h] *Effutire leves indigna Tragœdia verſus,*
Ut feſtis matrona moveri juſſa diebus,
Intererit Satyris paulum pudibunda protervis.

For Tragedy ſhou'd bluſh as much, to ſtoop
To the low mimick Follies of a Farce,
As a grave Matron wou'd, to dance with Girls.

And *Ovid:*

[i] *Omne genus ſcripti gravitate Tragœdia vincit.*

In Majeſty the Tragic Muſe excels.

I am entirely of [k] *Voſſius*'s Opinion, who ſays, "that "Tragedy is nearly allied to Epic Poetry, nay, often "ſuperior to it, in the Choice of Words, and Ma-"jeſty of Expreſſion." Which makes *Horace* ſay of it,

[l] *An Tragica deſævit & ampullatur in arte?*

Or ſwell with noble Rage the Tragic Style.
Ch. Carthy.

Not that all the Perſons in Tragedy are ſuppos'd to ſpeak with equal Dignity, which is as inconſiſtent with the Nature of Things, as of Men; nor ſhould the Language of a Meſſenger, or a Nurſe, be as ſublime as that of a Monarch, or a Deity: Tho' great

[g] Art. Poet. ℣ 89. [h] ℣ 231. [i] Triſt. L. II. ℣ 381. [k] C. XIV. [l] Ep. III. L. I. ℣ 14.

Care

Care ought to be taken, that nothing mean or trifling appear in theſe lower Characters, much leſs like Joke or Repartee, (a Fault which modern Writers, eſpecially thoſe of our own Country, are ſhamefully guilty of) leſt Tragedy ſhould ſink below itſelf. A judicious Tragic Poet will be leſs concern'd at the Hiſs, than the Laugh of an Audience.

Nor ſhould the higheſt Characters talk *always* with equal Majeſty, for that is as great an Abſurdity; much leſs ſhould they fall into Expreſſions of Low Life, improper for Tragedy, even when they are talking about Things of no Moment: For even in them there is a Sort of Dignity, inſeparable from Kings and Heroes. Mr. *Dryden*, therefore, has well obſerv'd, that in *Seneca*'s *Hippolytus* the Poet very judiciouſly makes *Theſeus* order his Servants to open the Door (a very familiar Circumſtance) in pompous Words:

[m] *Reſerate cluſos Regii poſtes Laris.*
Unbar the Portals of the Royal Dome.

In expreſſing Grief, when void of Anger, (for Anger is inſolent in all Circumſtances, and in great Men always ſwelling) the Style of Tragedy abates ſomething of its Majeſty, and deſcends almoſt into the Eaſe and Freedom, not of Comedy, (as [n] *Voſſius*, leſs accurately, expreſſes it) but of familiar Converſation. "Eſpecially if Heroes are introduc'd fallen from the "Height of Fortune; whoſe Spirits are leſs rais'd, "and their Language, of Courſe, is leſs tragical." As Anger, therefore, raiſes the Style of Comedy; Sorrow ſinks that of Tragedy: Both which *Horace* obſerves, in theſe Words:

[m] Act. III. Scen. I. [n] Inſt. Poet. Lib. II. c. XIV.

Interdum

* *Interdum tamen & vocem Comœdia tollit,*
Iratuſque Chremes tumido delitigat ore:
Et Tragicus plerumque dolet ſermone pedeſtri;
Telephus, & Peleus, cum pauper, & exul uterque,
Projicit ampullas, & ſeſquipedalia verba,
Si curat cor ſpectantis tetigiſſe querela.

Yet Comedy ſometimes may raiſe her Voice,
And *Chremes* be allow'd to foam and rail:
Tragedians too lay by their State, to grieve:
Peleus and *Telephus*, exil'd and poor,
Forget their ſwelling and gigantick Words,
If they wou'd have Spectators ſhare their Grief.
Roſcom.

The Reaſon of which is too plain, to want Explication. By *Sermo pedeſtris*, the Poet means a more familiar Style, but without Meanneſs; not quite degenerating into Proſe, much leſs into what is vulgar, rude, or ſcurrilous: Tho' plain, it ſhould be elegant; tho' humble, and complaining, yet graceful, and truly poetical. The Thoughts may, and often ought to be great, even when the Language is far otherwiſe. For there is a Sort of majeſtic and heroical Humility; and tho' Kings and Queens don't expreſs their Grief in pompous and ſonorous Words, yet there is ſome Difference betwixt theirs, and vulgar Sorrows. There is the ſame Diſtinction of Style, as in the Habit of Mourners. The Monarch may exchange his Purple for Sable, yet, in his Behaviour, in his Looks, there is ſuch a Reſerve of Majeſty, as will eaſily diſtinguiſh him from a private Perſon in the ſame Attire.

As we obſery'd elſewhere, there were two Sorts of Satire, the one of a lower Kind, and leſs confin'd; the other of a graver and ſeverer Turn, and more ſublime: So the former is ſuited to Comedy, the

* Art. Poet. ℣ 93.

latter

latter to Tragedy: For it is the Buſineſs of the one to ridicule the Follies of Mankind, and of the other to laſh Vices, and Crimes of a deeper Dye. Hence *Juvenal*, a Writer of the ſublimer Kind of Satire, ſeems to propoſe the Tragic Style for his Imitation.

[p] *Grande Sophocleo carmen bacchamur hiatu.*

The Satyr in a Rage,
Struts in the Buskins of the Tragic Stage. *Dryden.*

Nor is it leſs the Province of Tragedy to improve Virtue, than correct, and expoſe Vice; Virtue, I ſay, and that heroic too: For Tragedy is a Sort of heroic Drama; no Kind of Poetry is more ſacred; none, to which the nobleſt and beſt Sentiments are ſo ſuitable; none, in which more exalted Precepts of Virtue are, or, at leaſt, may be deliver'd.

Tragedy, therefore, is, in all Reſpects, adapted to the Sublime: But if it ſhould be ask'd, how I can reconcile this to Nature, that Men, of what Quality and Rank ſoever, ſhould be ſuppos'd, in their private and common Converſation, to make ſuch ſolemn Speeches, of ſo much Art and Elegance; when, in Fact, they rarely, if ever, talk in ſuch Language: I muſt ingenuouſly own, that this Objection lies ſtronger againſt thoſe Poems in which Actions are repreſented, than in which they are barely deſcrib'd; and therefore, in this Reſpect, Tragedy muſt give Place to Epic. It may be obſerv'd, however, that even in Comedy, (which is ſuppos'd to be leſs concern'd in this Objection) it is impoſſible to imagine, that Perſons ſhould really ſupport a Converſation, as they are repreſented to do, upon the Stage; and that it is full as natural to aſcribe this Sublimity of Style to Kings and Heroes, as thoſe ſmart Repartees, and fine Turns of Wit, to Perſons of in-

[p] Sat. VI. ℣ 635.

ferior

ferior Rank. But, upon the whole, the true Apology to be made for both, is, that theſe are *probable* Circumſtances, if not *true ones:* It is enough, if they bear a near Reſemblance to Truth, or if, as *Horace* has well expreſs'd it,

[q] *Ficta voluptatis cauſa ſint proxima veris.*

What was for Pleaſure feign'd, be near the Truth.

For it is impoſſible that any Degree of Fiction ſhould be the very Truth. Poets, as well as Painters, are allow'd to go beyond the Life: Nay, this is the very Point that ſhews their Skill moſt. When theſe imaginary Touches affect as ſtrongly as real Truths; if we can be agreeably deceiv'd, even in ſpite of Conviction, how great is the Art, and how juſt the Triumph of the Deceiver? And this is what *Horace* means, in the following Lines:

[r] *Ille per extentum funem mihi poſſe videtur*
Ire Poeta, meum qui pectus inaniter angit,
Irritat, mulcet, falſis terroribus implet,
Ut magus, & modo me Thebis, modo ponit Athenis.

I freely own, that Poet ſeems to ſhew
The greateſt Force of Genius, and of Art,
Whoſe pow'rful Images can fill the Soul
With Terrors not her own; can Pity raiſe,
Or Joy, or ſoft Complacency diffuſe:
Who, by the wond'rous Magic of his Pen,
With ſtrong Deception on my Fancy plays,
Now fixes me at *Athens*, now at *Thebes*.

Ch. Carthy.

Twenty-ſeventh Lecture.

But I muſt juſt take Notice, that what we have advanc'd concerning the Sublimity of this Drama, is applicable to all Tragedies, but not equally to all.

[q] Art. Poet. ℣ 338. [r] Ad Aug. ℣ 210.

For

For as (what I have before obſerv'd) there are two Sorts of Comedies; the one taken from Characters of a higher Rank, the other perfectly low: So there are two Sorts of Tragedies, the one quite ſublime, the other of a more humble Nature; the firſt repreſenting Kings and Heroes, and the latter, Men of private Life, but of conſiderable Character and Station in it. This, indeed, is intirely modern; the Puniſhments or Misfortunes of Tyrants, and Princes, being the only Subjects of the ancient Tragedy. We ſaid, that tho' it is form'd upon the Calamities of private Men, yet of ſuch whoſe Authority and Station in Life make them conſiderable; becauſe, tho' the Afflictions of common People afford Matter for Compaſſion, yet not for Tragedy, their Fortunes, and their Manners, being far below the Spirit of this Sort of Poetry, and the Dignity of its Style and Verſification. Some of the beſt Performances of our own Writers, are of this Sort, affecting us not ſo much with Terror, as Compaſſion; in exciting which, the Moderns ſeem far ſuperior to the Ancients.

Tragedies, likewiſe, admit of another Diſtinction, with Regard to their Event, either fortunate, or unfortunate. It is ſufficient to be true Tragedy, that Incidents of Diſtreſs and Sorrow are carried on thro' the whole, tho' the principal Perſons come off fortunately at laſt: I ſay, the *principal Perſons*; becauſe even in this Species, that ends happily, it is neceſſary that ſome Characters ſhould be unhappy in the Concluſion, eſpecially the worſt, or rather they only. For I can by no means approve of thoſe Tragedies of ours, in which Perſons of equal Innocence and Virtue, of the ſame Rank and Eminence, are puniſh'd and rewarded promiſcuouſly. It is ſo, I own, in human Life; but a ſingle Dramatic Piece is not deſign'd to give us an intire View of it: Let it therefore

fore be truly one, and entirely conſiſtent. It may, indeed, very juſtly leave the beſt, and moſt diſtinguiſh'd Characters, in Diſtreſs at laſt; which (as ſhall be obſerv'd hereafter) is the moſt affecting Sort of Tragedy. But if *ſome* innocent and virtuous Perſons are fortunate, let them be *all ſo*, and the bad only left miſerable; otherwiſe the Drama will be inconſiſtent: And theſe oppoſite Agitations of Mind will weaken and deſtroy each other. Let the Audience go home either in a pleaſant or melancholy Humour; if you attempt both, you ſucceed in neither.

But to return to the twofold Diviſion, we obſerv'd, of this Species of the Drama. "In Tragedies (ſays [f] *Voſſius*) that are truly tragical, the "firſt Scenes are uſually more ſedate, and the laſt "dreadful. Thus, what a terrible Concluſion has "the *Phœniſſæ* of *Euripides*, where *Oedipus*, with his "Eyes put out, is by *Creon* baniſh'd from *Thebes*, of "which he had once been King? So, again, in his "*Hecuba*, we ſee *Polymeſtor* in the ſame Diſtreſs; "*Hecuba* bewailing the Murder of her Son, and the "blind *Polymeſtor* relating the Calamities which the "Oracle had denounc'd againſt *Hecuba*, *Agamemnon*, and *Caſſandra*. * But if *Oreſtes* and *Ægiſthus*, "who

[f] Lib. II. c. XIII. p. 68.

* I am at a Loſs here to know what *Voſſius* means, who ſeems to intimate, that in the *Hecuba* of *Euripides*, the Death of *Ægiſthus* added to the Terror and Diſtreſs of the Play. But as *Agamemnon* himſelf is one of the Perſons in the Drama, there could be no Thoughts of revenging a Death, which had not then happen'd. In the *Electra*, there is an Account of *Ægiſthus*'s Death; but that Incident is not of ſo much Conſequence there, as *Voſſius* ſeems to make it in the Tragedy he alludes to. It is therefore moſt probable, that what is here ſaid relates to the *Electra* of *Sophocles*; where the concluding Scene repreſents the meeting of *Oreſtes* and *Ægiſthus*, and the latter is conducted

" who were determin'd Enemies, had been recon-
" cil'd, and parted without Blood-ſhed, the Tragedy
" had been leſs perfect. For, as we obſerv'd, Tra-
" gedy, in this Reſpect, differs from Comedy, be-
" cauſe this always ends happily, the other generally
" unhappily. *And ſuch ſhould be the Concluſion of a*
" *Tragedy, according to the Rules of Art; but ſome-*
" *times an unexpected Happineſs ariſes from the great-*
" *eſt Diſtreſs: When this is the Caſe, the Poet departs*
" *from the Rules of Art, in Compliance with the Taſte*
" *of his Audience, who had rather go home chearful,*
" *than melancholy.* In the *Electra*, both of *Sopho-*
" *cles* and *Euripides*, the Plot takes this proſperous
" Turn, tho' *Sophocles* has ſhewn much greater Skill
" in the Conduct of it. *Sophocles's Philoctetes* in
" *Lemnus*, concludes in the ſame Way; as does *Eu-*
" *ripides's Iphigenia* in *Aulis*; his *Iphigenia* in *Tauri*;
" and *Alceſtis*; where, by *Hercules's* Aſſiſtance, *Ad-*
" *metus* has his Wife reſtor'd. And ſo his *Oreſtes*;
" for when *Pylades* and *Oreſtes*, incens'd at *Mene-*
" *laus*, becauſe he would not aſſiſt them againſt *Tyn-*
" *darus*, had determin'd to put *Helena*, and his
" Daughter *Hermione*, to Death; *Helena*, by the
" Favour of the Gods, is taken up into Heaven,
" and *Hermione* (*Menelaus* coming firſt to her Re-
" lief, and *Apollo* interpoſing, to end the Contro-
" verſy) is, by the Direction of that God, married
" to *Oreſtes*, who now expiated from his Mother's
" Blood, is made King of *Argos*. And his *Helena*,
" again, concludes happily; where ſhe, having art-

ducted off the Stage, only to be put to Death in the ſame Place where he kill'd *Agamemnon*. A ſhort Sentence has probably been originally left out in *Voſſius*, which would have clear'd this Matter, in Words to this Effect; *Sic triſtis exitus in Sophoclis Electra, ubi Ægiſthus*, &c. It is much our Author, who, upon many other Occaſions, has cenſur'd *Voſſius*, ſhould paſs over a Miſtake of this Nature

" fully

" fully eſcap'd from *Theoclymenus*, returns to her " Husband *Menelaus*, and ſails, with a proſperous " Gale, into *Greece*. So, likewiſe, his Tragedies of " *Hippolytus*, *Rheſus*, and *Ion*. Even *Ezekiel*, the " *Jewiſh* Tragic Poet, (as *Clemens Alexandrinus* " calls him, *Strom.* Book I.) was the Author of a " Drama, which he entituled, Ἐξαγωγή, or the *bring-* " *ing out*; from whence *Euſebius* has tranſcrib'd no " ſmall Part into his *Evang. Præp.* Book IX. Chap. " IV. And what Event could be more joyful, than " the bringing that People out of *Ægypt? Nor does* " *Tragedy loſe its Name*, (as *Voſſius* farther obſerves) " *tho' the Concluſion is fortunate*; *becauſe a melan-* " *choly Cataſtrophe is no Part of its Eſſence. Other-* " *wiſe great Part of the Tragedies of* Euripides, *that* " *are come to our Hands, would ceaſe to be Tragedies.* " *Wherefore, in Reſpect to the Eſſence of this Poem, it* " *is ſufficient, if it has upon the whole the real Ap-* " *pearance of Diſtreſs.* So that the diſtinguiſhing " Property of it may appear, in repreſenting the " doubtful and diſaſtrous Fortunes of great Men. " Tho' I cannot deny, (ſays he) but that ſuch Tra- " gedies borrow ſomething from the Nature of Co- " medy. For the Nature of Tragedy is to be " mournful, which is undeniable, ſince Terror and " Commiſeration are the chief Ends propos'd by it. " When it is otherwiſe, it is only, as we ſaid, in " Compliance with the Taſte of the People. Hence " *Ariſtotle* ſays, that Poets fall into this Way of Wri- " ting, διὰ τὴν τῶν θεατῶν ἀσθένειαν, that is, to humour " the wrong or weak Judgment of an Audience. " But as the Populace are mutable, and inconſtant, " ſometimes approving one Thing, ſometimes ano- " ther; the beſt Way is to keep cloſe to the Nature " of Tragedy, and not without great Neceſſity to de- " part from it."

Thus that great Man, whoſe Sentiments I ſhould entirely approve of, if they did not ſeem, in one Particular, a little inconſiſtent. He ſays, it is not eſſential to Tragedies to end unhappily, which is certainly true; and yet is of Opinion, that ſuch as do not end ſo, borrow ſomething from the Turn of Comedy, becauſe the very Nature of Tragedy is mournful. If by Nature he means the moſt diſtinguiſhing Property, his Opinion is, indeed, indiſputable, but his Conſequence is not juſt; becauſe (as appears already, from both our Diſſertations upon this Subject) Sorrow may be the prevailing Paſſion in a Drama, which, nevertheleſs, may conclude ſucceſsfully. For every Scene of it, from the firſt to the laſt, may ſupply us with proper Objects of Terror and Compaſſion. If by Nature *Voſſius* underſtands the whole Eſſence of Tragedy, he is not only miſtaken, but plainly contradicts * himſelf; as appears from the Paſſages already quoted. The beſt Way, therefore, of determining this Point, ſeems to be, that *both* theſe Sorts are *true Tragedies*, but the one *more tragical* than the other.

However, that which is leaſt tragical, and ends happily, requires more Art to write, and is read with more Advantage. With Regard to the firſt Particular, I ſhall beg Leave to cite the Authority of Mr. *Dryden*. [t] "Neither is it (ſays he) ſo trivial an "Undertaking, to make a Tragedy end happily;

* *Voſſius* guards againſt all the Inconſiſtence he is here charg'd with, which is no more than this; That it is *eſſential* to a Tragedy, form'd κατὰ τέχνην, to end unfortunately, but not ſo to one made *ad populum*. He borrow'd his Sentiment from *Ariſtotle*, De Arte Poetica, Ἔστι δὲ οὐχ αὕτη ἀπὸ τραγῳδίας ἡδονή, ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον τῆ κωμῳδίας οἰκεία, *this is not a Pleaſure that ariſes from Tragedy, but rather of the Nature of Comedy*, c. XIV. Ed. Heinſ. al. XIII.

[t] Epiſt. Ded. to the *Spaniſh Fryar*.

"for

" for it is more difficult to ſave, than it is to kill. " The Dagger, and the Cup of Poiſon, are always in " Readineſs; but to bring the Action to the laſt " Extremity, and then, by probable Means, to re- " cover all, will require the Art and Judgment of a " Writer, and coſt him many a Pang in the Per- " formance." As to the Advantage, the Rewards and Puniſhments, by this Means, are more equitably adjuſted: Which, indeed, may be tolerably affected in thoſe Tragedies, which end unfortunately: For there, the chief Characters, being generally wicked, meet with that Puniſhment they deſerve, and ſo ſtrike a Terror into the Audience, which is accompanied, likewiſe, with ſome Mixture of Pity; for it is not neceſſary they ſhould be notoriouſly wicked, to merit Puniſhment. Beſides, ſometimes they *repent* before they go off the Stage; as we have ſeen in two or three *Engliſh* Tragedies lately publiſh'd, which have met with that Applauſe they juſtly deſerv'd: And even the Puniſhment of Robbers and Aſſaſſins, how juſtly ſoever they may deſerve it, raiſes ſome Degrees of Compaſſion in us. I may add, farther, that in this Kind of Tragedy the *Under-characters*, which are innocent and virtuous, may at the Concluſion be rewarded for thoſe Virtues, whatſoever Misfortunes they have ſtruggled with before. Upon the whole, from comparing what has been ſaid, it is plain, that even in thoſe Tragedies which end unhappily, there is a *Poſſibility* that poetical Juſtice (as it is call'd) may be preſerv'd: Tho' the other Sort is *better* adapted to this Purpoſe, where the *chief Characters* receive their proper Reward, the Virtuous made happy, and the Wicked miſerable.

Terror is chiefly excited in us by a Repreſentation of bad Men puniſh'd with Misfortunes; Pity with a Mixture of Terror, by a View of good Men under the ſame Circumſtances; both Paſſions indifferently,

by thoſe who are not remarkable either for their Virtues, or their Vices. I have put the Caſe of good Men puniſh'd with Misfortunes, for it is conſiſtent with the exacteſt Juſtice of the Drama, to make the moſt innocent meet the moſt diſaſtrous Fate; a Sort of Tragedy the moſt tragical, of which our own Stage ſupplies us with many Inſtances. This Practice, I ſay, muſt be conſiſtent with poetical Juſtice, which is ſtrictly ſo with the divine. It was, indeed, leſs equitable upon the ancient Stage, when the Heathens knew very little of the Rewards and Puniſhments of a future State: But with us *Chriſtians* the Caſe is entirely different.

But tho' it is no Injuſtice to repreſent good Men labouring under Diſtreſs, even at the laſt; yet the Wicked ſhould never come off in real Triumph, and Satisfaction: They ſhould always, at leaſt, be ſo far Sufferers, that if Death is not inflicted on them, nor any other external Puniſhment; yet they ſhould feel the Anguiſh of their own Minds, and not enjoy any ſecret Satisfaction in their Vices. On the other Hand, tho' good Men, to raiſe our Compaſſion, are ſometimes put to Death; yet we ſhould, even then, ſee them ſupported by a juſt Conſciouſneſs of their own Innocence, and the Hopes of a better Life: For tho' the Things of this World are diſpos'd of in ſo dark and uncertain a Manner as to make us often lament the Condition of the beſt of Men; yet Poets, like Preachers, ſhould not fail to remind the Audience, that there certainly will be eternal Puniſhments and Rewards hereafter.

" *The beſt Tragedies* (ſays [y] *Voſſius*) *are thoſe where* " *the Characters are neither perfectly virtuous, nor* " *extreamly wicked.*" If this Rule is to be confin'd to ſome of the Characters only, it is juſt; but will

[y] Inſt. Poet. L. II. C. XIII. p. 61.

not

not hold, if extended to all of them. "For the "Deſign of Tragedy is to raiſe Terror and Pity." No Doubt of it. "But when the Wicked are unfortunate, we are not much diſpos'd either to be "terrify'd, or touch'd with Compaſſion at it. For "*who* (as *Tully* ſays) *is ever mov'd at the Puniſhment "of a Traitor, or a Parricide?* It ſhould rather raiſe "a Sort of Satisfaction in us, to think that Juſtice "has overtaken thoſe that have ſo well deſerv'd it?" But, with Submiſſion to the great Names of *Cicero* and *Voſſius*, all good and generous Minds are affected with *Compaſſion* at the Execution of Rebels and Traitors; and nothing can be more *terrible* than the Puniſhment inflicted upon ſome of them. "Nor "ſhould they be Characters of unblemiſh'd Virtue; "for the Calamities of a good Man raiſe a ſecret "Indignation; and it looks like a Sort of Inhumanity to ſuppoſe that the beſt of Men may be moſt "miſerable; to which I may add, that ſuch a Re"preſentation may have ſome Influence in deterring "weak and unthinking Minds from Virtue." There might be ſome Reaſon to believe ſo, if there was no other Life but the preſent; otherwiſe 'tis a weak Suſpicion. Beſides, is there no other Occaſion to introduce good Characters upon the Stage, but to *make them miſerable?* Has not he himſelf already * determin'd, that there are ſome Tragedies which end unhappily, and others happily? What he has farther

* Thoſe Tragedies that are writ according to the *niceſt Rules of Art*, he ſaid before, upon the Authority of *Ariſtotle*, do NOT end happily: And upon the ſame Authority he ſays, in *ſuch* Plays the Characters are neither extremely wicked, nor perfectly virtuous. *Ariſtotle*, as a Heathen, was right in his Opinion, according to Dr. *Trapp*'s Theory; *Voſſius*, who follows him throughout, is not inconſiſtent. As to the Opinion in general, I will not pretend to determine, ſince it is *dignus vindice nodus*.

advanc'd upon this Subject, is generally right. "Therefore the *propereſt* Characters for the Stage, "are thoſe of a middle Nature, between the two "Extreams of Virtue and Vice; whoſe Errors, ra-"ther than Crimes, make them unfortunate; as *Oe-*"*dipus* in *Sophocles*: Or who are reduc'd, by Ne-"ceſſity, to commit ſome wicked Action, it being "the laſt Expedient; as *Medea* firſt kills her Bro-"ther *Abſyrtus*, and afterwards her own Children: "Not that theſe Characters are always requiſite; for "*Ægiſthus* and *Clytæmneſtra* are unpardonably "wicked; *Electra* is good; *Oreſtes* rather virtuous, "than not; *Agamemnon* cannot be ſaid to be bad; "for tho' he ſacrifices *Iphigenia* in *Aulis*, it is only "in Obedience to the Oracle, and againſt his own "Inclination. Nor can *Hercules* be ſaid to appear "in an indifferent Light, but rather in a good one. "Wherefore we are not to conclude that thoſe Tra-"gedies muſt be entirely condemn'd, which are not "in all Reſpects agreeable to *Ariſtotle*'s Rules; but "rather, that thoſe are the beſt, which are conform-"able to them." The *moſt tragical* (with Submiſſion to the learned Author) rather than the *beſt*, if the Rules he ſpeaks of are really *Ariſtotle*'s. For I am not ſatisfied, I confeſs, that they are his, nor does *Voſſius* direct us where to find them*; Otherwiſe I

* They are very eaſy to be found in c. XIV. of *Ariſtotle*'s Art of Poetry, according to *Dan. Heinſius*'s Edition; c. XIII. in others. All that *Voſſius* has advanc'd above, is only a Comment on that Chapter. Does *Voſſius* ſay the BEST Tragedies are conformable to theſe Rules? So does *Ariſtotle*, ἡ μὲν οὖν τοιαύτη καλλίστη τραγῳδία ἐκ ταύτης τῆς συστάσεως ἐστί, p. m. 270, &c. That we are not affected with Compaſſion or Terror at the Sufferings of the Wicked? ſo does *Ariſtotle*, ὅτι ἐλεεινὸν, ὅτι φοβερὸν φαίνεται τὸ συμβαῖνον, p. 269. That a middle Character is to be choſen? ſo does *Ariſtotle*, ὁ μεταξὺ ἄρα τούτων λοιπὸς· ἔστι δὲ τοιοῦτος, &c.

am

am entirely of his Opinion in the reſt I have quoted from him; except that I do not perfectly underſtand how it is poſſible for Men to act wickedly, *ratione ſumma*†.

Twenty-eighth Lecture.

We are come now to the Concluſion of the Definition; in the laſt Clauſe of which, expreſſing the Invention of Tragedy, after theſe Words, *to raiſe the Paſſions, particularly thoſe of Pity and Terror*; we have the following, and *to purge the Mind from them.* It remains, therefore, for us to ſhew, by what Means Tragedy *purges the Paſſions*, and that by putting them in Motion, which ſeems to promiſe a quite contrary Effect: And when that is done, juſt to point out whence that Pleaſure ariſes, which we receive from Tragedy; or from what the Cauſes diſcoverable in the inmoſt Receſſes of our Nature, our Minds are delighted with Sorrow, and feel a pleaſing Anguiſh, even from Terror and Commiſeration. To theſe Enquiries, I ſhall, at preſent, content myſelf with a ſhort Anſwer, which ſhall be enlarg'd hereafter, in a Work that will be publiſh'd in our own Tongue, a

† *Ratio* in *Voſſius*, is not us'd for *prudentia*, as Dr. *Trapp* ſeems to take it, but in the ſame Senſe with that noted Saying, *ratio ultima regum*, the laſt Expedient, or Reſort of Kings. The Inſtances alledg'd illuſtrate this: *Medea* is forc'd to kill her Brother *Abſyrtus*, to ſecure her own Eſcape; and her Children afterwards, to prevent them from falling into ſuch Hands as would execute greater Cruelties upon them. The Circumſtance of *Oedipus*, made unfortunate not by real Crimes, is very well deſcrib'd by Mr. *Lee:*

To you, good Gods, I make my laſt Appeal,
To clear my Virtues, or my Crimes reveal:
If in the Maze of Fate I blindly run,
And backward trod thoſe Paths I ought to ſhun,
Impute my Errors to your own Decree;
My Hands are guilty, but my Heart is free.

few Months hence, and which has already had the Honour of being encourag'd, by the Subſcriptions of ſeveral Gentlemen in this Body; to whom I here return my publick Acknowledgments. The Work I mean, is an *Engliſh Tranſlation of Virgil's Æneis*: Where, in ſome Obſervations upon the fourth Book, this nice and difficult Point ſhall be diſcuſs'd at large. In the mean Time, the Nature of my preſent Deſign makes it neceſſary for me juſt to touch upon it here.

Are the Paſſions, then, to be purg'd, even by their being put in Agitation? Yes; and why not? Bile and Phlegm, and other Humours in the Human Body, cannot be carried off, unleſs they are firſt fermented, and put in Motion: Nay, Humours are often expell'd by Medicines of the ſame Nature and Temperament; as Acids by Acids; Bitters by Bitters; and ſo of the reſt. Some of the Paſſions, therefore, are purg'd by themſelves, as Terror, and Pity; others, again, by the Means of theſe two. Terror and Pity, as I have ſaid, have this Effect upon themſelves; becauſe ſuch dramatical Repreſentations make us more accuſtom'd to miſerable and dreadful Objects; on which Account they become more familiar to us, and, conſequently, affect us with leſs Miſery and Terror. "By this Means, (ſays [w] *Voſſius*) Tragedy is ſaid "περαίνειν τὴν τῶν τοιούτων παθημάτων κάθαρσιν, "to purge and relieve the Mind from ſuch Perturbations; juſt as (to mention one Inſtance out of "many) the View of thoſe Calamities, which have "formerly been the Lot of great Men, teaches "others to bear their preſent Afflictions with Patience. To which Purpoſe, *Athenæus* has quoted "ſome elegant Verſes of *Timocles*, at the Beginning "of his ſixth Book." And in another Place, ſays

[w] Inſt. Poet. L. II. c. XI. p. 47.

Voſſius,

Voſſius, [x] "The Deſign of Tragedy is to ſtrike a "Terror in the Audience, ἐκπλῆξαι, as *Polybius* ex- "preſſes it in his ſecond Book, where he is diſ- "courſing againſt *Phylarchus* of the different Ends "which Hiſtorians and Tragic Poets have in "View. The Audience feel this Emotion from a "View of the Calamity before them, and the An- "guiſh is ſtill heighten'd by the Dignity of the Suf- "ferers. But the Deſign of this Emotion is to purge "the Mind from thoſe very Paſſions. For, as a Ve- "teran Soldier, or Phyſician, by being often con- "verſant with Objects of real Miſery, have this Ad- "vantage, that they make no greater Impreſſion upon "them, than they ought; ſo, in Tragedy, by ſeeing "the violent Effects of the Paſſions, the Mind is "taught to reſtrain them within due Bounds. Hence "it is plain, why *Ariſtotle* ſays, as we obſerv'd, that "the End of Tragedy is to *purge the Paſſions*; in "which he differs entirely from *Plato*, who look'd "upon Tragedies as the Inflammatories of them, "*Ariſtotle* as their proper Correctives."

To which I may add, that when the Paſſions have been long exercis'd with imaginary Diſtreſs, their Strength is ſo much abated, that they have the leſs left to exert upon real Miſery. The Obſervation which *Simo* makes in *Terence* about deceiving *Davus* with the Appearance of a Wedding, may be almoſt as juſtly applied to the Exceſs of Paſſion (for the Exceſs is what we ſpeak of, ſince the Paſſions are in themſelves good).

[y] *Simul ſceleratus Davus, ſi quid conſili*
Habet, ut conſumat nunc, cum nihil obſint doli.

Taking the Queſtion, then, in this View, the Paſſions may be ſometimes purg'd by the Violence of

[x] Inſt. Poet. L. II. c. XIII. p. 65. [y] Ter. And. Act. I. Scen. I.

their own Agitations: As Wind, which is nothing elſe but Air in a more rapid Motion, carries off thoſe noxious Vapours that are mix'd with it, and would otherwiſe be the Occaſion of Diſeaſes.

The Paſſions, therefore, of Terror and Pity, are purg'd by their own Operations, and the reſt by their Means. For Tragedies not only give us a Repreſentation of violent and licentious Love, of Anger, Ambition, Revenge, and the like; but the Audience, by the Impreſſions of Terror and Pity, are made to feel the Effects of them. Yet there ſeems to be a Sort of Fallacy in this. Are not ſome Paſſions rais'd to enormous Heights, and a wild Licentiouſneſs, even by their being repreſented; eſpecially that of Love, which ſeems to be the whole Buſineſs of our modern Tragedies. Have not ſuch Ideas ſo ſtrongly impreſs'd more Influence upon the Imagination, than the poetical Medicines can carry off, which are not applied till after the Fit is begun, only by deſcribing the criminal Exceſs, or fatal Conſequence of theſe Paſſions? As human Nature is but too prone to indulge the Extravagance of them, may it not be juſtly ſaid,

Sponte ſua properant, labor eſt inhibere volantes?
The Courſers of themſelves will run too faſt,
The Art muſt be to moderate their Haſte. *Addiſon.*

Are they not more inflam'd by the Repreſentation, than corrected by the Remedy? To theſe, and all other Scruples of this Sort, this ſeems to be the proper Anſwer: That theſe Effects are, or are not to be expected, juſt according to the Nature and Manner of the Performance. As the Caſe, in Fact, is, an Audience is more likely to receive ill Impreſſions, than Inſtruction, from modern Tragedies: It is one Thing to ſhew the Paſſions by their *Symptoms*, (to uſe the Language of the Phyſicians) *i. e.* by their

Appear-

Appearances and *Effects*; another to repreſent and *excite* them by all the Methods of *Inſinuation* and *Allurement*. In this the later Tragedies, eſpecially thoſe of our own Country, are ſcandalouſly faulty: Not ſo the ancient, nor the *Grecian* Writers, who ſhame us *Chriſtians*, by making the Glory of Chaſtity their own. But Tragedies that are form'd upon the Plan of Reaſon, and of Virtue, pleaſe the Mind without corrupting it: They furniſh the Imagination with agreeable Images, without conveying any dangerous Poiſon under the Cover of them; they unbend the Mind, without debaſing it to Softneſs, and Effeminacy: They deſcribe and repreſent the Paſſions, as they are ſeated in all the tumultuous Diſorder in the Soul; but this is ſo far from exciting us to the ſame Extravagance, that it is the ſure Way to deter us from it. There is, I own, ſomething pleaſant in ſuch Deſcriptions; but the Pleaſure riſes from no vicious Source, from no bad Principle; but from the Imitation, the Elegance, and the Art of the Poet, which ſtrikes out ſuch lively Images of human Nature; and, laſtly, from the pleaſing Anguiſh which Terror and Compaſſion raiſe within us: Which ſuggeſts to me the other Enquiry, that of accounting for the ſecret Cauſes of this Pleaſure.

Voſſius ſeems by no Means to give a full Solution of this Difficulty. "It may be a Queſtion (ſays he[z]) "how Tragedy can ſupply us with Delight, which "is the End of all Poetry, ſince it repreſents Sor- "row and Diſtreſs; and the Misfortunes, eſpecially "thoſe of great Perſons, can give no Satisfaction "to a virtuous Mind. In Anſwer to this Difficulty, "we may obſerve, that the Pleaſure ariſes not from "the Calamities of others, but from the Art of the "Poet. How much does the Sight of real Dra-

[z] Inſt. Poet. L. II. c. XI. p. 47.

" gons and Monſters fill us with Terror! but the " Pictures of them give us Pleaſure, becauſe we are " entertain'd with the Skill of the Painter. Beſides, " it is ſome Satisfaction, to be acquainted with ſuch " Misfortunes, becauſe they may make us more " cautious and prudent." What *Scaliger* has ſaid, is much to the ſame Purpoſe. " But here (ſays he[a]) " it may be objected, that Delight is included in the " very Definition of Poetry: But, in Tragedy, how " can the Anguiſh of Sorrow, Mourning and Diſtreſs, " be entertaining? The Reaſon is, becauſe Pleaſure " does not flow from Joy only, but from ac- " quiring any Sort of Learning. Now the Spe- " ctator has the Benefit of making ſuch an Ac- " quiſition; thus we behold Pictures with Plea- " ſure, and are delighted with the moſt hideous " Forms." But neither of theſe Anſwers come up to the Point: Undoubtedly great Part of the Pleaſure that is given us, ariſes, as we before obſerv'd, from the Skill of the Poet, but from Nature a much greater, which *Voſſius* and *Scaliger* * take no Notice of. Indeed, we may learn, and our Prudence may, and ought to be improv'd by theſe Repreſentations: But the Mind, in the Pleaſure it receives, has no Regard to theſe prudential Conſiderations. The Pleaſure, therefore, of Pity, ſeems to ariſe, firſt, from hence, that if Things go well with us, another Man's Miſeries, plac'd in View before us, make us more ſenſible of our own Happineſs, and teach us to feel the Value of it: According to *Lucretius*'s Obſervation, ſo often quoted:

[b] *Suave, mari magno, turbantibus æquora ventis,*
E terra magnum alterius ſpectare laborem;

[a] Poet. Lib. III. p. 373. [b] Lib. II. ℣ 1.

* Both borrow their Solution from *Ariſtotle*, c. IV. who tells us, that the *Pleaſure* the Mind takes is, in *learning* the Likeneſs between the Repreſentation and the Original.

Non quia vexari quenquam eſt jucunda voluptas,
Sed, quibus ipſe malis careas, quia cernere ſuave eſt.

'Tis pleaſant, when the Seas are rough, to ſtand
And view another's Danger ſafe at Land:
Not 'cauſe he's troubled, but 'tis ſweet to ſee
Thoſe Cares and Fears, from which ourſelves are free.

Creech.

If we are in Affliction, the Repreſentation of the like Miſeries makes our own more ſupportable. In both theſe Caſes, the Pleaſure ariſes from the Compariſon, a Principle to which great Part of the Miſery and Felicity of human Life is owing. It is commonly ſaid, that *no Body is miſerable but by Compariſon*; and it may be as truly ſaid, that *no Body is happy but by Compariſon*. But perhaps it may be here obſerv'd, that this Solution does not reach the Difficulty: Pity has no Relation to ourſelves, but to others; I ſhould rather think it has to both: And how much ſoever we apply it to others, the Eſtimate is made from ourſelves. Nor is this alone ſufficient to explain fully the Point in Queſtion: Another Cauſe of this Pleaſure is, the Operation of the Mind upon itſelf, or (what the Schools call) its *reflex Act*. It contemplates that generous and humane Diſpoſition, which inclines it towards others, and is conſcious that this Commiſeration does, in ſome Meaſure, ariſe from it. Perhaps it may be objected, that theſe two Principles are not conſiſtent, ſince the one is an Evidence of Self-love, the other of a great and generous Mind: I ſhall take another Opportunity, as I have ſaid, of ſhewing the ſtrict Alliance there is between theſe two Principles; and that Self-love, taken in its full Latitude, ought to be allow'd as the Source of all our Paſſions, and the great Principle

ciple of human Actions†. As to Terror, the Delight it gives us in Tragedy, comes from hence; at firſt, (ſo rapid is the Current of our Ideas) we are affected with this Appearance of Diſtreſs, as if it was real; and then, by an agreeable Turn of Thought, we recollect, that this is all imaginary, and that there is no Danger. There are other Circumſtances*, which I ſhall take no Notice of at preſent, nor ſtay to enlarge upon thoſe Hints I have given, becauſe I ſhall examine them more at large in the foremention'd Diſſertation.

Æſchylus, *Sophocles*, and *Euripides*, the only *Greek* Tragic Poets that we have now left, are well known.

If we compare the ancient and modern Writers of Tragedy, the latter are much ſuperior in forming and unravelling the Plot. The former have ſhewn a good deal of this Contrivance in their Comedies, but in their Tragedies very little; the Moderns in both. The chief Deſign of the ancient Tragic Poets was, to raiſe Terror, rather than Pity; of the Moderns, Compaſſion rather. The former excel in the Greatneſs and Magnificence of their Sentiments; the latter in the Variety, and paſſionate Parts of them. In one you have more Excellencies, in the other fewer Faults. Among the Moderns, none deſerve any Compariſon but the *French* Writers and our own: They, indeed, are elegant, ingenious, exact in obſerving Rules, and fond of imitating the Ancients; but want Spirit, Vigour, and poetic Fire:

Non ſpirant tragicum ſatis, aut feliciter audent.

† See this beautifully illuſtrated, in Mr. *Pope*'s *Ethic Epiſtles*, III. 270, *&c.*

* Mr. *Addiſon* has treated this Subject with great Accuracy, in *The Spectator*, Vol. VI. N°418.

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The *Engliſh* are not to be charg'd with this Defect; nor does the Impetuoſity of their Genius hinder their having a Regard to the Rules of Art. Monſ. *Rapin* allows that they excel all the Nations in *Europe*, except his own: Whence we may be allow'd to conclude, that there is no great Reaſon for that Exception.

LECTURE

LECTURE XXIX, &c.

Of EPIC, *or* HEROIC POETRY.

WE are, at length, by juſt Degrees, advanc'd to the laſt, as it is the beſt, and moſt perfect Kind of Poetry: And no Wonder we ſhould finiſh our Diſſertations here, where the utmoſt Bounds are ſet to human Compoſitions. What *Scaliger* ſaid of *Buchanan*, tho' in a Strain of exceſſive Flattery, when applied to a *Man*; may be juſtly true of a *Thing*, of Epic Poetry in particular:

Namque ad ſupremum perducta Poetica culmen
In te ſtat; nec quo progrediatur, habet.

Nature's great Efforts can no farther tend,
Here fix'd her Pillars, all her Labours end.

For Mr. *Rapin* has very juſtly obſerv'd, An Epic, or Heroic Poem, properly ſo call'd, is, undoubtedly, the greateſt Work which the Soul of Man is capable of performing. We have already obſerv'd, in our firſt Lecture, that all the other Branches of this divine Art are ſumm'd up, and included in this one: And in a Diſſertation which I have written in another Language[e], I have attempted to give a ſhort Account of the Reaſon of it. What I have now to

[e] Preface to my *Engliſh* Tranſlation of *Virgil*'s *Æneis*.

ſay

ſay upon this Subject, which is ſo much ſuperior to all others, for the Excellence and Extent of it, is not ſo much as the Dignity of it deſerves; becauſe I have already enter'd into many Particulars, which belong to it, as the Nature of the Subject, I undertook to diſcuſs, made it neceſſary; particularly, when I gave a View of Poetry in general, and the ſeveral particular Branches of it; when I treated of the *Poetic Style, the Beauty of its Thoughts, or the Elegance and Sublimity of them, of the Drama in general, and Tragedy*, a Species of it. For theſe Sorts of Poetry have many Things in common:

——— *Alterius ſic*
Altera poſcit opem res, & conjurat amice.

And ſeveral Things, which have a Relation to this Subject, I have conſider'd more at large elſewhere, in another [d] Language. What I mean, will, perhaps, be better underſtood in the Progreſs of this Diſcourſe; for nothing, Gentlemen, can be more diſagreeable to you and me, than a needleſs Repetition of the ſame Things, and ſaying what has been ſaid a thouſand Times over.

Monſ. *Boſſu*, a *French* Gentleman, and an excellent Critic, has given us a Diſcourſe upon Epic Poetry, in his own Language, which is well known; a Treatiſe every Way worthy of the Applauſe which the Learned have beſtow'd upon it. But it had been no Derogation to its Merit, if ſome Parts of it had been a little more conciſe; For the Author, how eminent ſoever for Penetration of Thought, Soundneſs of Judgment, and Variety of Erudition; ſeems to purſue his Obſervations too minutely, and gives us Diſtinctions without End. And too many Diſtinctions muſt obſcure, rather than explain the Meaning of a Writer.

[d] Ibid.

An

An Epic, or Heroic Poem, may be thus defin'd: *It is a Poem expreſs'd in Narration, form'd upon a Story partly real, and partly feign'd; repreſenting, in a ſublime and flowing Style, ſome glorious and fortunate Action, that is diſtinguiſh'd by a Variety of great Events; to form the Morals, and inflame the Mind with the Love of heroic Virtue.* This Definition is more regular in Form, and more comprehenſive, as to the Matter of it, than Monſ. *Boſſu's*: He, following the Method of his own Definition, divides his whole Work into ſix Books; the firſt treats of the Nature of an Epic Poem, which includes the Fable; the ſecond, the Matter, or the Action of the Poem; the third, the Form, or the Narration; the fourth, the Moral, or the Characters of the Perſons concern'd; the fifth, the Machinery, or the Appearance and Influence which the Gods have in it; the ſixth, concludes with the Thoughts, and the Style.

He purſues each of theſe Articles at large, and diſcuſſes them with a great deal of Wit, Learning, and Judgment; but the Method he has choſen, ſeems not ſo proper. The *Nature* of the Thing defin'd contains all the Particulars of it, and therefore ought not to have been a diſtinct Branch of his Diviſion, which ſhould (as is uſual) have been ſo form'd, as to have diſtinguiſh'd only three different Parts of the Definition, namely, the Matter, the Form, and the End: The *Matter* includes the Action and the Fable, under which are rang'd the Incidents, Epiſodes, Characters, Morals, and Machinery; the *Form* comprehends the Way, or Manner of the Narration, whether by the Poet himſelf, or by any of the Perſons introduc'd, whoſe Diſcourſes are related: To this Branch, likewiſe, belongs the moving of the Paſſions, the Deſcriptions, Diſcourſes, Sentiments, Thoughts, Style, and Verſification; and beſide theſe, the Similes, Tropes, Figures, and, in ſhort, all the Orna-

Ornaments and Decorations of the Poem. The *End* is to improve our Morals, and increaſe our Virtue, which is of itſelf ſo plain and obvious, that there is no Occaſion to ſay much about it.

I thought it requiſite juſt *to mention* the ſeveral Parts of Epic Poetry, tho' I do not deſign to *enlarge* upon all of them: Becauſe, in the Courſe of theſe Lectures, I have already touch'd upon ſeveral of them, as they fell in with Arguments of the ſame Kind; many of them have been particularly conſider'd, *viz.* the Action, and the Fable, (for theſe are almoſt the very ſame, both in Epic and Dramatic Poetry) the Morals, Characters, the different Kinds of Narration, the Paſſions, Deſcriptions, Sentiments, the Sublimity of Style and Thought, the Verſification, Compariſons, Tropes, Figures, and all the other Embelliſhments of Poetry: What remains, therefore, is only to offer ſome ſcatter'd Obſervations upon thoſe Heads, which relate more eſpecially to Epic Poetry, with ſuch Remarks, as have not yet been taken Notice of. And, after all, this will look more like the Gleanings, than the Harveſt. When I have done this, I propoſe to tranſlate one Chapter of *Boſſu*, where he explains the Nature and Origine of Epic Poetry. It is a ſhort one, but remarkable for its Elegance and Perſpicuity. And, laſtly, I ſhall add ſome Reflections upon the moſt celebrated Writers of Epic Poetry, both ancient and modern.

Ariſtotle, in his Book of Poetry, the only one that is now left, has allotted only two Chapters for the Conſideration of Epic ſeparately; tho' he often mentions it, in ſhewing the Relation it bears to Tragedy: The Reaſon of which is very evident, becauſe moſt of what he ſaid of the one, might be applied to the other; and therefore, in thoſe two Chapters, he has done very little more than adjuſt the Rules of the Drama to Epic Poetry, obſerving, all along, that

Diſtinction

Diſtinction between theſe two Sorts of Poetry, which the Nature of them requir'd; and interſperſing, now and then, the Praiſes of *Homer*. I might (if you would excuſe the Compariſon) ſay the ſame Thing of theſe Diſſertations, which is one Reaſon why I have not treated this Subject more at large.

There is the ſame Difference between the Fable and the Action, both in Epic and Tragic Poetry, namely, the Action is an Atchievement of ſome eminent Perſon, which produc'd ſome great and memorable Event. The Fable is the Complication of all thoſe Incidents, Epiſodes, and other Circumſtances, which promote the Action, and carry it to its proper Period, or elſe which ſerve to illuſtrate, or to embelliſh and adorn it. *Epiſodes* are either abſolutely neceſſary, or very requiſite: All Epiſodes are not Incidents *, tho' all Incidents are Epiſodes; becauſe ſome Incidents are not *adventitious* to the Action, (which, as the Etymology of the Word implies, is eſſential to an Epiſode) but make up the very Form and Series of it: Or (to uſe a more harſh and inelegant Expreſſion) they are not *collateral*, but *direct* Parts of it; theſe, and many other Particulars of this Sort, for the Reaſon ſo often mention'd, will not be enlarg'd upon at preſent.

The Action, in Epic Poetry, muſt, of Neceſſity, be *one*, as well as in Tragedy; tho' it may, and ought to

* The Reader will underſtand this Diſtinction much better by the Examples which the Author has mention'd in his Preface to the *Æneis*; and I ſhall, for that Reaſon, take the Liberty to tranſcribe ſome of them. "The Storm, in "the firſt Book of *Virgil*, driving the Fleet on the Coaſt "of *Carthage*, is an Incident, not an Epiſode, becauſe "the Hero himſelf, and the whole Body of his Forces, "are concern'd in it; and ſo it is a direct, and not a col"lateral Part of the main Action. The Adventures of "*Niſus* and *Euryalus*, in the 9th Book, are Epiſodes, not "Incidents; *i. e.* not direct Parts of the main Action."

be

be more comprehenſive. As to the Place of Action, there is no confining it to any certain Bounds; Epic has certainly a much larger Range than Tragedy; but the more it keeps within Compaſs, the more perfect and entire the Action ſeems to be. *Ariſtotle* expreſly ſays, that as to Time, there is no fixing it to any determin'd Period. *Homer's Iliad* does not contain above the Space of forty-ſeven Days*; the *Odyſſee* (as *Boſſu*†, and, after him, *Dacier*, are of Opinion) takes up eight Years, and ſix Months; the *Æneid* almoſt ſeven Years. But, in this Point, theſe great Criticks ſeem not to have made ſo juſt a Determination; for not every Thing that is related by the Poet, or the Perſons he has introduc'd, makes, ſtrictly ſpeaking, a Part of the Action, but that only, which is perform'd by the Hero, and his Aſſociates, from that Place, where you enter upon the Poem, to the Concluſion of it. For Inſtance; the Action of the *Æneid*, in a ſtrict and proper Senſe, does not begin at the building of the wooden Horſe:

——*Fracti bello, fatiſque repulſi.* Æn. II. 13.

But from the Time that *Æneas* ſet Sail from one of the Ports of *Sicily*:

Vix è conſpectu Siculæ telluris in altum. I. 38.

And taking the Queſtion in this View, Monſ. *Segrais*, in the Preface to his admirable *French* Tranſlation

* Thus prov'd by *Boſſu*: The *Iliad* begins with the Plague, which laſts ten Days. The Poet allows for the Recovery of the *Grecians* 10, Battles that follow 5, Funeral Rites of *Patroclus* 11, and of *Hector* 11; in all, 47.

† The *Odyſſey*, according to the ſame Author, Book III. c. XII. takes up 58 Days. And the *Æneis* is reduc'd within half a Year, or a ſingle Campaign, beginning where Dr. *Trapp* does. I know not how *Boſſu* came to be ſo miſrepreſented.

of

of the *Æneid*, has demonſtrated, that the Action of that divine Poem falls within the Compaſs of one Year. And we may obſerve almoſt the ſame Thing of *Homer's Odyſſee*.

I think *Dacier* has miſtaken the Meaning of *Ariſtotle* in another Place, tho' there, alſo, he follows *Boſſu*; and that is, with Regard to the Actions or Adventures of the Perſons. Epic (ſays that Philoſopher) is μίμησις σπουδαίων, which *Dacier* tranſlates thus; *the Imitation of the Actions of illuſtrious Perſons*, not of illuſtrious Actions. And perhaps that is not amiſs: But I cannot be of his Opinion, when he declares, that if the Perſons are illuſtrious, it is of no great Moment, whether the Actions are ſo, or not. He very juſtly affirms, that the moſt glorious Actions of private Men are not a proper Subject for an Heroic Poem; but then the other Point muſt be given againſt him, that it is neceſſary, that *not the Perſon only, but the Action, ſhould be illuſtrious*. All the Actions, even of *Alexander* or *Cæſar*, *Achilles* or *Æneas*, are ſurely not proper for Epic. I agree, therefore, that *Ariſtotle* muſt be underſtood to mean the Actions of Heroes; but then he would alſo imply, the Actions of Heroes, as Heroes. And, no doubt, *Horace* was of the ſame Opinion, (tho' *Dacier* brings him in as an Evidence on his Side) when he ſays,

[c] *Res geſtæ regumque, ducumque.*

i.e. conſidering them as Kings and Generals; for the Words immediately following, which *Dacier* takes no Notice of, are,

——— *& triſtia bella.*

What *Boſſu* further advances [*] in Support of his Opi-

[c] Art. Poet. ℣ 73. [*] Book II. c. XIX.

nion,

nion, is of no great Moment, *viz.* that the little Enmities in the *Iliad*, and in the *Odyſſey* the Return of an Exile into his Country, are Actions equally ſuitable to private Men and Heroes. I confeſs, (and ſo does he) that *Æneas*'s reſtoring his Country, as it were, and laying the Foundation of a new Kingdom; are much more heroical: But even thoſe above-mention'd, as they are ſet off by *Homer*, with their heroical Circumſtances, could not but have been great, tho' they had been done by private Men. In the *Iliad*, indeed, and more eſpecially in the *Odyſſey*, ſome Things are related below the Majeſty of Epic; as for Inſtance, what the Poet tells us of *Ulyſſes*'s Herdſman and Swineherd; which *Ovid* has thought fit to copy in *Penelope*'s Epiſtle to that Chief:

[g] *Hoc faciunt cuſtoſque boum, longævaque nutrix,*
Tertius immundæ cura fidelis haræ.

Thus the old Nurſe, the Hind, and Hogherd pray,
True Servants all, and faithful in their Way.
Rhymer.

Theſe, I own, are not repreſented as the Actions of the Hero himſelf; but ſtill are unworthy to be mention'd in an Heroic Poem. The Simplicity of ancient Times is alledg'd, in Excuſe for Things of this Nature; and, for my Part, I am willing to admit it: But, certainly, let the Men live in what Age you pleaſe, they ſtood in Need of ſome Excuſe. *Virgil* has nothing of this Kind; who has a much better Right than *Homer* to that Encomium of *Horace*[h],

—— *Qui nil molitur inepte.*

Throughout the *Æneid* there is nothing mean, nothing diſhonourable, nothing that is not truly heroic. As to the forming of a Hero, he is not to be repre-

[g] ℣ 103. [h] De Art. Poet. ℣ 121.

ſented

ſented adorn'd with every Virtue, as a Character entirely perfect, becauſe there is no ſuch Thing in Nature; but he may advance as near as poſſible to that Perfection. *Ulyſſes* and *Æneas*, indeed, are at no great Diſtance from it; but what Sort of a Hero is *Achilles!*

[i] *Impiger, iracundus, inexorabilis, acer,*
Jura negat ſibi nata, nihil non arrogat armis.

Impatient, raſh, inexorable, proud,
Scorning all Judges, and all Laws, but Arms.
Roſcommon.

Theſe are heroical Virtues, no doubt! an admirable Image of a Demi-god! But more of this in another Place.

There are two Things which chiefly diſtinguiſh Epic from Tragedy, the *Manner of the Repreſentation*, and the *Event*, or *Cataſtrophe*. As to the former, it is certain, that Tragedy is form'd upon Action, and Epic upon Narration. For what *Ariſtotle* ſays of Epic, [k] ὅτι δεῖ τὸς μύθους καθάπερ ἐν ταῖς τραγῳδίαις συνιστάναι δραματικὸς, *that the Fable, as in Tragedy, ought to be dramatical*, it is plain, from the very Words, muſt be underſtood of the *Fable*, which ought to be active, *i. e.* lively, full of Motion, and growing warmer, as it comes nearer the Concluſion; and has no Relation to the *Form*, or *Manner of repreſenting*, or *imitating*, which, as every Body knows, in Heroic Poetry is, and always was, narrative, and not dramatic.

They differ, alſo, in the Event, or Concluſion. In Tragedy, the Concluſion is *generally* unfortunate, but *never* ſo in Epic; the Reaſons of which Rule are, *Firſt*, The Examples of *Homer*, and *Virgil*, who are, and ought to be our Guides, and Ma-

[i] Ibid. ℣ 121.

[k] Περὶ ποιητικῆς, cap. XXIII.

ſters;

ſters; even *Achilles*, the Hero of the Poem as he is, tho' very undeſervedly, comes off with Succeſs; and much more ſhould *Ulyſſes* and *Æneas*. In this Particular theſe Writers have been univerſally follow'd by all, who wou'd be thought Epic Writers; for which Reaſon, *Statius* (as *Boſſu* has obſerv'd) rather choſe to break the Unity of the Action, than make his *Thebais* end unfortunately, after the miſerable Fratricide of *Eteocles* and *Polynices*. And not only the Authority of theſe Poets, but the very Reaſon of the Thing, ſupplies us with Arguments for this Rule. *Firſt*, Altho' in Tragedy (where the Action is much ſhorter, more ſimple, and finiſh'd, as it were, at a Heat) an unfortunate Concluſion may be ſo far from diſpleaſing, that it may be agreeable to the Audience; yet in Epic, after ſuch a Series and Variety of Adventures, after ſuſtaining ſo many, and ſo great Difficulties, the Reader muſt be out of Humour with the Poet, unleſs the whole ſhould conclude happily at laſt. *2dly*, The chief End of Tragedy is, to purge the Paſſions, eſpecially thoſe of Terror and Pity, by a ſhort and brisk Emotion; but the Deſign of Epic Poetry is, by more ſlow and leiſurely Operations, to remove bad Habits, and reſtore good ones; to ſubdue Vice, and recommend Virtue; which would be done with a very ill Grace, if the Hero of the Poem, or the Prince endu'd with heroic Virtue, (for ſuch he either is, or ought to be) ſhould come to a deplorable End. *3dly*, An Epic Poem, properly ſo call'd, is, and always muſt be written in Honour of the Country, or the Religion of the Author; between which, and the Hero, there is a near Relation; and therefore he ought to come off in Triumph at laſt. *Boſſu* inclines to this Opinion, nay, *expreſly* determines, that this is the *truer* Conduct. I have ventur'd to advance a Step further, being of Opinion, for the Reaſons now alledg'd, it is not

only proper, but eſſential to Heroic Poetry; and, in Conſequence of that Opinion, have made a happy Concluſion Part of the Definition. The two Differences, therefore, that we ſpoke of, between Tragedy and Epic, are (as the Schools term it) *ſpecific* Differences, the others are only *accidental*; thoſe are Differences in *Nature*, theſe only in *Degree*, *Extent*, or *Greatneſs*.

Thirtieth Lecture. The Moderns ſeem to miſtake that Part of Epic and Tragedy which contains the τὰ θαυμαϛὰ, or the *wonderful*, confounding the *wonderful* with the *improbable*, and uſing thoſe two Words promiſcuouſly. If it was really ſo, the τὰ θαυμαϛὰ would always be faulty; for that is always faulty, which is improbable. Theſe poetical Prodigies would be improbable, if they were repreſented to be perform'd by any human Power: But the Caſe is quite different. The Divine Power, and the Agency of the Gods, make all this agreeable to Reaſon. Thus, in *Homer*, that the Horſes ſhould ſpeak; and, in *Virgil*, that the Myrtle Roots ſhould drop Blood, is wonderful, but not improbable: For our moſt ingenious Tranſlator of *Homer* ſeems to be miſtaken, when he aſſerts, that theſe were perform'd without the Interpoſal of the Gods. As to the latter, *Virgil*[l] expreſly declares it to be a Prodigy:

Horrendum, & dictu video mirabile monſtrum.

And a little after,

[m] —— *Nymphas venerabar agreſtes,*
Gradivumque Patrem, Geticis qui præſidet arvis,
Rite ſecundarent viſus, omenque levarent.

I implore the rural Nymphs,
And *Mars*, who o'er the *Getic* Field preſides,
The Omen to avert, and grant Succeſs.

[l] Æn. L. III. ℣ 26. [m] ℣ 34.

But

But plainer still, in what follows:

[n] *Monstra deûm refero.*

As to *Homer*, he, in express Terms, asserts, that *Juno* made the Horse speak [o]:

Ἀυδήεντα δ' ἔθηκε θεὰ λευκώλενος Ἥρη.

Then, strange to tell, (so *Juno* will'd) he broke
Eternal Silence, and portentous spoke. *Pope.*

In such Cases as these, whatsoever is possible, is probable: If you determine otherwise, Poetry is depriv'd of one of its best Ornaments, its greatest Fund of Surprize. And the same Observation extends to some Parts of the wonderful, which are not accounted for by a divine Power: As in the Instance of *Polyphemus*, and the other *Cyclops*, in *Homer* and *Virgil*. That there were really Giants, is an Opinion, which not only the Ancients believ'd, but the Scriptures have confirm'd: But whether *such* Giants were ever in Being, as are there describ'd, is a Point of no Moment. Therefore *Virgil's* Description of *Polyphemus* is very injudiciously censur'd by some Criticks:

[p] —— *Graditurque per æquor*
Jam medium, nec dum fluctus latera ardua tinuit.

Then stalk'd along
Thro' the mid Ocean; nor did yet the Waves
Tinge his tall Sides.

And afterwards:

[q] *Clamorem immensum tollit; quo pontus, & omnes.*
Intremuere undæ, penitusque exterrita tellus
Italiæ, curvisque immugiit Ætna cavernis.

He rais'd a hideous Yell; at which the Sea

[n] ỳ 59. [o] Il. XIX. ỳ 407. [p] Æn. III. 664.
[q] Ibid. 672.

Trembled, and all its Waves: *Italia* quak'd;
And *Ætna* bellow'd thro' its winding Caves.

This is ſo far from being improbable, or carrying the Hyperbole too far, that nothing can be more elegant and ſublime; eſpecially if we conſider the Nature of Fear, which always enlarges what is great, and raiſes a Train of Horrors upon one another. It is, indeed, very hyperbolical; but the Nature of the Thing deſcrib'd, not only excuſes, but demands that Boldneſs. I own *Homer* has a few Examples of the improbable; and there is one Inſtance of this Kind in *Virgil*; I mean where *Camilla* is deſcrib'd in thoſe moſt elegant Verſes,

Illa vel intactæ ſegetis per ſumma volaret
Gramina, nec teneras curſu læſiſſet ariſtas;
Aut mare per medium fluctu ſuſpenſa tumenti
Ferret iter, celeres neque tingeret æquore plantas.

She o'er the Tops of untouch'd Corn wou'd fly,
Skimming along, nor hurt the tender Grain;
Or run, ſupported on a ſwelling Wave,
Thro' the mid Sea, nor tinge her nimble Feet.

The Lines are exceeding beautiful, and therefore the more is the Pity that the Thing is impoſſible.

In my Definition of Epic Poetry, I inſerted this Clauſe, *that it muſt be form'd upon a Story partly real, and partly fictitious:* For both theſe are equally neceſſary. In Tragedy, which is ſo much ſhorter, the Performance may not only be excuſable, but commendable, tho' the whole Fable ſhould be fictitious: But in a long Work, ſuch as an Heroic Poem is, the Reader will be tir'd, unleſs he has the Pleaſure of finding ſome Truth interwoven with the Fable. Beſides, an Heroic Poet writes, or ought to

Æn. VII. 808.

write

write after the Examples of *Homer* and *Virgil*, in Honour of the Country he belongs to, or the Religion he profeſſes; and then it muſt be neceſſary that he ſhould have ſome Regard to popular Opinions, or true Hiſtory. This is requiſite, at leaſt to the well-being, if not the very being of an Heroic Poem.

Little need be ſaid about the Machinery, which, among the ancient Heathens, was the Agency of their falſe Gods, and of Angels and Dæmons among us *Chriſtians*; its Beauty and Magnificence being well known. The Dignity of an Heroic Poem would ſcarce be kept up without it, eſpecially ſince the τὸ θαυμασὸν, or the Marvellous, depends upon it. I ſhall ſay no more, but refer the Reader to the fifth Chapter of *Boſſu*.

The Verſification of Heroic Poetry is what no Body is a Stranger to, which, among the *Greeks* and *Romans*, conſiſted of Hexameters. This Kind of Verſe is ſo peculiar to Epic, that when it is us'd upon other Occaſions, it is commonly call'd Heroic Verſe. It is needleſs to obſerve how numerous, and ſublime, and beautiful, in all Reſpects, it is, and how much it has tended to ennoble thoſe Languages: Our *Engliſh* Verſe comes neareſt to it, both in Gravity and Majeſty, but at how great Diſtance? which yet, is, at leaſt, both in Strength and Energy, far ſuperior to the *French* and *Italian*.

I have made theſe few ſcatter'd Reflections upon Heroic Poetry, and propoſe to add no more, at preſent, for a Reaſon I have hinted before. As to the Nature and Origin of it, I ſhall only offer the following clear and ſuccinct Account from the ſecond Chapter of the firſt Book of the learned *Boſſu*.

" The moſt conſiderable Difference my Subject " preſents me with, between the Style of the An- " cients and Moderns, is, that our Way of Speaking " is plain, proper, and without Circumlocution;

" whereas theirs was full of Myſteries and Allego-
" ries: The Truth was generally conceal'd under
" thoſe ingenious Inventions, which, for their Ex-
" cellence, are call'd *Fables*, or *Sayings*; as if there
" was as much Difference between thoſe fabulous
" Diſcourſes of the Wiſe, and the ordinary Lan-
" guage of the Vulgar, as there is between the Lan-
" guage proper to Men, and the Sounds which
" Beaſts uſe, to expreſs their Paſſions and Senſa-
" tions.

" The firſt Uſe of Fables was to ſpeak of the
" divine Nature, according to the Notions they had
" of it. This ſublime Subject cauſed the firſt Poets
" to be ſtyl'd *Divines*, and Poetry *the Language of the*
" *Gods*. They divided the divine Attributes, as it
" were, into ſo many Perſons, becauſe the Weak-
" neſs of the Human Mind could not well conceive
" or explain ſo much Power and Action in a Sim-
" plicity ſo great and indiviſible, as that of God is.
" And perhaps they were jealous of the Advantages
" they receiv'd from ſuch excellent and refin'd
" Learning, which they thought the vulgar Part of
" Mankind were not worthy of.

" They could not tell us of the Operations of
" this Almighty Cauſe, without ſpeaking, at the ſame
" Time, of its Effects: So to *Divinity* they added
" *Phyſiology*, and treated of it in the ſame Manner,
" without quitting the Umbrages of their allegorical
" Expreſſions.

" But *Man* being the chief, and moſt noble of all
" the Effects which God produc'd, and nothing be-
" ing ſo proper, or ſo uſeful to *Poets*, as this Sub-
" ject, they added it to the former, and treated of
" *Morality* in the ſame Way that they did of *Divi-*
" *nity* and *Phyſicks*. And from Morality thus diſ-
" cours'd of, Art has form'd that Kind of *Poem* and
" *Fable*, which we call *Epic*.

" The

" The Poets did the ſame Thing in *Morality*, " which the Divines did in *Theology*. That infinite " Variety in the divine Actions and Operations, ſo " much above our Underſtanding, forc'd them, as " it were, upon dividing the ſingle Idea of the one, " and uncompounded divine Eſſence, into ſeveral " Perſons, under the Names of *Jupiter*, *Juno*, *Nep-* " *tune*, and the reſt: On the contrary, the Nature " of *Moral Philoſophy* being ſuch as never lays down " Rules for any particular Thing, has oblig'd the " *Epic Poets* to unite in one ſingle Idea, in one and " the ſame Perſon, and into one Action, which ap- " pear'd extraordinary, all that look'd like it in dif- " ferent Perſons, and in different Actions, which " might be thus contain'd as ſo many *Species* under " their *Genus*.

" Therefore, when *Ariſtotle* ſays[f], φιλοσοφώτερον, " καὶ σπουδαιότερον ποίησις ἱστορίας ἐστίν, *That Poetry* " *is more philoſophical, and more ſerious, than Hiſtory*, " he ſays this, not ſo much to magnify the Excel- " lence of this Art, as to explain the Nature of it. " *Poetry*, ſays he, *teaches Morality, not by a bare Re-* " *cital, as an Hiſtorian, who tells us what* Alcibiades " *did, or ſuffer'd*, (which is *Ariſtotle*'s own Inſtance;) " *but by propoſing all that a Perſon, let the Poet call* " *him by what Name he pleaſes, ought either neceſſa-* " *rily, or moſt probably to have ſaid, or done, upon* " *ſuch an Occaſion*. It is in this Manner, that it lays " down either the unhappy Conſequences of ill- " judg'd Deſigns, and wicked Actions; or elſe the " Rewards of good Actions, and the Satisfaction " one receives from a Deſign form'd by Virtue, and " conducted by Prudence. Thus in *Epic*, according " to *Ariſtotle*, let the Names be what they will, yet " the *Perſons* and the *Actions* are feign'd, *allegorical*,

[f] Περὶ ποιητικῆς, c. IX.

" and *univerſal*, not *hiſtorical* and *particular*. [t] Ἡ " μὲν Ποίησις μᾶλλον τὰ καθόλυ, ἡ δ' ἱςορία τὰ καθ' " ἕκαςον λέγει, i. e. *Poetry repreſents Things rather in* " *general, but Hiſtory in particular. Horace* is like- " wiſe of the ſame Mind, who is not ſatisfy'd with " ſaying, that Poets teach *Morality* full as well as " *Philoſophers*; but prefers *Homer* to all of them:

[w] *Qui quid ſit pulchrum, quid turpe, quid utile, quid non,*
Plenius, ac melius Chryſippo, & Crantore dicit.
Who has what's baſe, what's decent, juſt and good,
Clearer than *Crantor*, or *Chryſippus* ſhow'd.
Creech.

" The Reaſon why *Poets* excel *Philoſophers* in this " Reſpect is, that every Sort of *Poem* is an *Imita-* " *tion*. Now Imitation is extremely natural, and " pleaſes every Body; and therefore nothing is more " likely to engage the Paſſions, and the Attention of " an Audience. Beſides, Imitation is Inſtruction by " Examples, and Examples are the moſt proper Me- " thods of Perſuaſion; becauſe they prove that ſuch " or ſuch a Thing is feaſible. In ſhort, Imitation is " ſo much the Eſſence of Poetry, that the Art it " ſelf, as *Ariſtotle* informs us, owes its very Original " to it. And *Horace* recommends it very particu- " larly to the Poet, which he is forming:

[x] *Reſpicere exemplar vitæ, morumque, jubebo*
Doctum imitatorem, & veras hinc ducere voces.
Thoſe are the likelieſt Copies, which are drawn
By th' Original of Human Life. *Roſcommon.*

" But tho' the *Poets* become *moral Philoſophers*, " they do not ceaſe to be *Divines*; on the contrary,

[t] Ibid. [w] Lib. I. Ep. II. 3. [x] De Art. 317.

" the

" the *Morality* they treat of, does indiſpenſably ob-
" lige them to have a Vein of Theology run thro'
" all their Works: Becauſe the Knowledge, the Fear,
" and the Love of God, in a Word, Piety and Re-
" ligion are the chief, and moſt ſolid Foundations
" of the other Virtues, and of all *Morality*.

" The *Preſence of the Deity*, and the Superinten-
" dence which ſo auguſt a Cauſe has over the Action,
" obliges the *Poet* to repreſent this *Action* as great,
" important, and manag'd by *Kings* and *Princes*.
" Hence *Horace*:

[x] *Res geſtæ regumque, ducumque.*
To write of great Commanders, and of Kings.
Roſcommon.

" Upon the ſame Account he is oblig'd to think
" and ſpeak in an elevated Way, above the Vulgar,
" and in a Style that may, in ſome Meaſure, keep up
" the Character of the divine Perſons he introduces.
" To this End ſerves the poetical and figurative Ex-
" preſſion, and the Majeſty of *Heroic Verſe*. As
" *Horace* again:

[y] —— *Cui mens divinior, atque os*
Magna ſonaturum, des nominis hujus honorem.
No, he alone can claim that Name, that writes
With Fancy high, and bold and daring Flights.
Creech.

" But all this being divine and marvellous, may
" quite ruin all *Probability*, without which an Action
" is not likely to perſuade. Therefore the Poet
" ſhould take ſpecial Care, as to this Point, ſince his
" chief Buſineſs is to inſtruct Men, and *form them*
" *to Virtue*.

[x] *Ar.* 73. [y] Lib. I. Sat. IV. 43.

" To all this the *Poets* are oblig'd, by the very " Nature of these Things, which they propose for " the Subjects of their Poems and Instructions. " The Manner of teaching them usefully and me- " thodically, has likewise oblig'd them to add se- " veral other Rules.

" Epic Poetry is directed to the *Morals* and the " *Habits*, rather than the *Passions*. These rise on a " sudden, and their Heat is soon over; but the *Ha-* " *bits* are more calm, and come on, and go off " more leisurely: Therefore the *Epic Action* cannot " be contain'd in one single Day, as the *Dramatic*. " It must have a longer, and more just Space al- " low'd it, than the Action of *Tragedy*, which is " directed to the *Passions*.

" This Distinction makes *Tragedy* and *Epic* differ " very much: The Violence of *Tragedy* requires a " great deal more lively and brisk Representation " than a bare *Recital*. It is all Action, the Poet " never speaks, as he does in *Epic*, where there are " no Actors.

" But if, in this Respect, *Epic* is inferior to *Tra-* " *gedy*, yet it is superior both to *Philosophy* and *Hi-* " *story*; because it is a great deal more active than " bare *Philosophy*, and the Recitals of *History*: And " tho' it does not, like *Tragedy*, represent the Action " to the Eyes of the Spectators, yet it ought, more " frequently than *History*, to break off the Narra- " tion, by intermixing the Speeches of the Persons " represented. This *Aristotle* directs, when he says, " that *the Narration of Epic ought to be dramatic*, " *i. e.* active." [I differ from the learned Au- thor in the Meaning of this Passage, and agree with *Dacier*, as I said before: But it is a Matter of no great Moment. The Speeches of the Persons may be *included* in this Rule of *Aristotle's*; but it seems more applicable to the *Fable*, which is the *Matter* of

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the Poem, than to the *Form*, which is the Way of representing it. But *Bossu* adds,]

" *Epic* has, likewise, its *Passions*, which give it no " small Advantage over *Philosophy* and *History*; but " in this it is still inferior to *Tragedy*: For tho' it " has a Mixture of all the *Passions*, yet *Joy* and " *Admiration* are the most essential to it. These, " indeed, contribute most towards the making us " wise Men: *Admiration* and *Curiosity* are the Cause " of *Sciences*; and nothing engages the Mind so for- " cibly as *Pleasure*; so that these two Passions must " never be wanting in a Work invented with a View " to teach us what we are indispensably oblig'd to " know.

" To conclude: Because Precepts ought to be " concise, that they may be more easily understood, " and more strongly retain'd in the Memory; and " because nothing can be more effectual to this Pur- " pose than the proposing one single Idea, and col- " lecting all Things so well together, that they may " be present to the Mind at once; the *Poets* have " reduc'd all to one single Action, under one and " the same Design, and in a Body whose Members " and Parts should be homogeneous. Hence arise " two of *Horace*'s Rules: The one,

[2] *Quicquid præcipies, esto brevis, ut cito dicta*
Percipiant animi dociles, teneantque fideles.
Let all your Precepts be succinct and clear,
That ready Wits may comprehend them soon.
Roscom.

the other,

[3] *Denique sit quod vis simplex duntaxat, & unum.*"
Be what you will, so you be still the same. *Roscom.*

[2] De Art. Poet. ℣ 335. [3] Ibid. 23.

This is *Boſſu's* Account of the Origin and Nature of Epic Poetry.

Thirty-firſt Lecture.

Under this Head there is very little Room to make any Compariſon between the Ancients and the Moderns; for theſe latter Ages have ſcarce produc'd any Thing that deſerves the Name of an Epic Poem. We know our Countryman, Mr. *Dryden's* Judgment, about a Poem of *Chaucer's*, truly beautiful, indeed, and worthy of Praiſe; namely, that it was not only equal, but even ſuperior to the *Iliad* and *Æneid*: But we know, likewiſe, that his Opinion was not always the moſt accurate, nor form'd upon the ſevereſt Rules of Criticiſm. What was in Hand, was generally moſt in Eſteem; if it was uppermoſt in his Thoughts, it was ſo in his Judgment too. I am ſure, the Opinion is too monſtrous to deſerve a ſerious Refutation. But even among the Ancients themſelves, if you except *Homer* and *Virgil*, you will ſcarce find one that is truly an Epic Poet. The heroic Laurels are due to them only; nor has the World produc'd *two more ſuch Heroes*, no, nor one. How far a Compariſon is to be made between this immortal Pair, and what, in my Opinion, is to be determin'd, *with Regard to their different Merits*, I have declar'd at large in another Place*, and given ſome Reaſons for my Sentiments; namely, that *Virgil* is much indebted to *Homer*; but that *Homer's* Works are inferior to *Virgil's*.

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* See p. 45. of the Author's Preface to the *Æneis*, where the Compariſon between theſe two Poets is drawn out at large. As the Caſe is commonly ſtated, *Homer* excell'd in *Fire* and *Invention*, and *Virgil* in Judgment; but Dr. *Trapp* does not allow *Homer's* Superiority in any Reſpect. "It is a great Error (ſays he) to think that all "Fire

The Poems of *Lucan* and *Silius Italicus*, are rather hiſtorical, than heroic; their Actions are *real*, not *fictitious*; *particular*, not *univerſal*: But partake, in ſome Meaſure, of the Nature of Epic; as they are Poems of a conſiderable Length, expreſs'd in Narration, and written in Heroic Verſe; each of them have their Heroes; the Thoughts and Language are ſublime, or they would have us think ſo; and there are ſome Degrees of Fiction interwoven with Truth. They are reducible, therefore, to this Claſs, and their Authors have a Right to be mention'd in it. *Lucan*, however liable to Cenſure in ſome Things, is, upon the whole, far from being a

" Fire conſiſts in quarrelling and fighting, as do three " Parts in four of *Homer*'s, in his *Iliad*. The Fire we are " ſpeaking of, is Spirit and Vivacity, Energy of Thought " and Expreſſion, which Way ſoever it affects; whether " it fires us by Anger, or otherwiſe, nay, tho' it does not " fire us at all, but even produces a quite contrary Effect: " However it may ſound like a Paradox, it is the Pro- " perty of this poetical Flame, to chill us with Horror, " and make us weep with Pity, as well as kindle us with " Indignation, Love, or Glory. Not that *Virgil* is de- " ficient in that Sort of Fire, the fierce, the rapid, the " fighting."

Mr. *Pope*'s Sentiments of theſe two Poets are ſomewhat different; the Reader ſhall have the Pleaſure of comparing them; " This Fire (ſays he) is diſcern'd in *Virgil*, " but diſcern'd as thro' a Glaſs, reflected, and more ſhi- " ning than warm, but every where equal and conſtant: " In *Lucan*, and *Statius*, it burſts out in ſudden, ſhort, and " interrupted Flaſhes: In *Milton* it glows like a Furnace, " kept to an uncommon Fierceneſs by the Force of Art: " In *Shakeſpeur* it ſtrikes before we are aware, like an ac- " cidental Fire from Heaven: But in *Homer*, and in him " only, it burns every where clearly, and every where " irreſiſtibly." *Pope*'s Tranſlation of *Homer*'s *Iliad*. Dr. *Trapp* criticizes on this Paſſage.

mean

mean Writer, and deſerves a very conſiderable Character. He is ſometimes harſh, and over-ſtoical; ſometimes cold, and too nearly allied to Proſe; and, again, on the other Hand, he is ſwelling, bombaſt, and affects a Way of Expreſſion ridiculouſly lofty; and yet, in many Things, very elegant and ſublime, and full of an heroic Spirit. As to *Silius Italicus*, *Pliny*, in one of his Epiſtles[c], has given the following Character: *Scribebat carmina majore cura, quam ingenio. Virgilii natalem, religioſius quam ſuum, celebrabat; Neapoli maxime, ubi monumentum ejus adire, ut templum, ſolebat.* "He wrote Verſes with "more Pains, than Genius; he obſerv'd *Virgil*'s "Birth-Day more religiouſly than his own, eſpe- "cially at *Naples*, where he us'd to frequent his "Monument as if it had been a Temple." And ſince he lov'd *Virgil* ſo paſſionately, that he almoſt ador'd him, it is ſtrange he ſhould not have come nearer to his Style. The ſame may be ſaid of *Lucan*. How much unlike to *Virgil*'s! It is, alſo, as evident, that *Statius* rather admir'd *Virgil*, than imitated him. He therefore ſays very juſtly,

[d] —— *Nec tu divinam Æneida tenta.*

But what follows is not ſo well:

Sed longe ſequere, & veſtigia ſemper adora.

For this, with an Appearance of Modeſty, inſinuates, that he follow'd *Virgil*: But at how great a Diſtance! with what unequal Steps! How unlike is his Way of Writing, and Thinking! But even *Statius* is not without his Beauties, tho' his Poem is not properly Epic; for the Heroes of his *Thebais* are too much upon a Level, no one is ſuperior to the reſt; and, beſides, there are two Actions, one unfortunate, and

[c] Lib. III. Ep. VII. [d] Thebaid. L. X.

the

the other happy. *Taſſo* is, indeed, truly heroic, and has juſtly attain'd no ſmall Eſteem. But, to paſs by other Particulars, he is too full of Magic, Enchantments, Machinery, and aerial Perſonages. Of the ſame Fault our Countryman *Spencer* is ſtill more remarkably guilty, who treads almoſt perpetually upon enchanted Ground, and the greateſt Part of whoſe Characters are Fairies, Ghoſts, Magicians and Giants. He is all over Allegory, purſues not one Action but ſeveral, and ſuch as have ſo little Relation to each other, that it is difficult to ſee any Connection. But, in other Reſpects, this moſt ingenious Writer was born a Poet, if any one ever was. If we conſider his Verſification, and eſpecially his Copiouſneſs of Invention, he is juſtly celebrated, among the Poets of the firſt Claſs.

If *Milton* did not write an Heroic Poem, properly ſo call'd, yet he certainly wrote an excellent one, ſuch as deſerves, or rather is above all Commendation. He is no ſlaviſh Imitator of *Homer* and *Virgil*, he opens a Way entirely new, and entirely his own: In Fruitfulneſs of Invention, Sublimity of Genius, in the Weight and Luſtre of his Thoughts and Words, and, laſtly, in the Perfection of his Judgment, he is, perhaps, equal to either of them, tho' he wrote in a Language much inferior to both theirs, eſpecially *Homer's*; and is particularly much leſs correct than *Virgil*. Let other Moderns imitate *Milton*, by imitating *Homer* and *Virgil* leſs: Let them improve and form themſelves, as much as poſſible, by their Genius, their Judgment, and their Way of Writing and Thinking: To do this, is to imitate; but to tranſcribe their Poems, or, at leaſt, a great Part of them, into their own, is not Copying, but Stealing.

[e] *Nec circa vilem, patulumque moraberis orbem*
Nec verbum verbo curabis reddere, fidus
Interpres.

Nor think it eſſential to an Heroic Poem, to deſcribe the Anger of ſome great General, the Return of a King into his own Country, a Colony tranſplanted from one Region to another, the Deſcription of *Æolia*, and the Winds, the ſolemn Celebration of Funeral Games, a Deſcent into Hell, or a Hero furniſh'd with celeſtial Armour: But rather avoid theſe, and many other Subjects, which are treated of by *Homer* and *Virgil*; and for that very Reaſon, becauſe they are ſo. Whoever attempts an Heroic Poem, muſt form a new Plan, and guard againſt the Stroke of *Horace's* Satire:

[f] *O imitatores, ſervum pecus.*

Let him ſtrike out with that noble and daring Spirit of *Lucretius*;

[g] *Avia Pieridum peragro loca, nullius ante*
Trita ſolo; juvat integros accedere fontes,
Atque haurire; juvatque novos decerpere flores,
Inſignemque meo capiti petere inde coronam,
Unde prius nulli velarunt tempora Muſæ.

I feel, I riſing feel poetic Heats,
And now inſpir'd, trace o'er the Muſes Seats,
Untrodden yet: 'Tis ſweet to viſit firſt
Untouch'd and Virgin Streams, and quench my Thirſt.
I joy to crop freſh Flow'rs, and get a Crown,
For new and rare Inventions of my own.

[e] De Art. Poet. 132. [f] Lib. I. Ep. XIX. 19.
[g] Lucret. IV. 1.

So

So noble, great, and gen'rous, the Design,
That none of all the mighty tuneful Nine
E'er grac'd a Head with Laurels like to mine.

Creech.

Beſides the Writers I have mention'd, there are many others of an heroical Genius, tho' they never wrote an Heroic Poem. Among the *Latins*, *Claudian*, a Writer of the middle Age, is the moſt eminent; upon whoſe Beauties and Defects I have already made a few Obſervations: And among thoſe of our own Country, the late Mr. *Dryden*; beſides others now alive, who, for that Reaſon, cannot ſo well be mention'd without Offence.

CON-

CONCLUSION.

I HAVE now gone through the ſeveral Particulars I propos'd to treat of in the Courſe of theſe Lectures: What I have too lightly touch'd upon, or entirely omitted, I leave to my Succeſſors to diſcuſs more fully, who will ſupply my Defects, and correct my Errors. Nothing now remains, but to return to you, Gentlemen, my heartieſt Thanks, and to teſtify my ſincereſt Wiſhes for your Proſperity. I ſhould quit this Office with more Regret, did I not conſider, that, at any Time, to have receiv'd Marks of your Favour, will for ever remain to me thoſe of Honour. Nothing is in my Power to return for them, but my moſt ardent Prayers for the Welfare of this Univerſity, that as it daily receives freſh Ornaments in Buildings, ſo it may make new Acquiſitions (if there is Room for any) in Learning and Virtue, and in its Reputation for both; and that you may be as ſecure from the Attempts, as you are above the Reproaches of your Enemies. And, ſurely, unleſs we are much deceiv'd in our Hopes, and our Wiſhes biaſs us with too fond Credulity, we may eſteem as freſh Omens of our Happineſs, thoſe numerous Towers that riſe ſacred to the Muſes, even in the moſt difficult Times; inſomuch, that if we retire from the Univerſity but a few Months, we are almoſt Strangers to it upon our Return, and verify the old Saying, tho' from a very different Reaſon, *Oxonium quærimus in Oxonio*, we ſeek for *Oxford* within her own Walls. It is amazing, then, that Men, who boaſt of the greateſt Zeal for their Country, ſhould hate and deſpiſe that which is the diſtinguiſhing Ornament of it. It would be blind Partiality in us, if, in other Reſpects, we pretended to excel the whole Earth. Brave, as

we

we are, yet ſo are the *French*, ſo the *Germans*. Are we powerful by Sea, and rich in Commerce? the *Dutch* are alſo: And it would be the Height of Arrogance, to claim to ourſelves the Laurels, in Point of Learning and Ingenuity. But that the *Engliſh* Univerſities are not to be paralleld, is the Confeſſion and Admiration of all the World: Even one of them, the leſs of the Two, I need not ſay equals, but exceeds all Foreign Ones together. This Glory is our peculiar Property, which yet ſome endeavour to extinguiſh, who would be thought ſtrenuous Defenders of their Country. If you ask me the Reaſon for it, I know of none but what the old Saying in *Terence* ſupplies me with, *Male mens, malus animus*, Bad Principles produce bad Deſigns. To ſuch I wiſh true Repentance. As to myſelf, Words are too weak to expreſs the Sentiments of my Heart for that Candour and Affection with which you have honour'd me with your Attendance, have pardon'd my Miſtakes, and accepted my weak Endeavours. May the *Oxford* Muſes flouriſh, for ever flouriſh, more and more; and may you, the Encouragers and Promoters of them, go on to promote them, and, by your Increaſe in Poetry, and all other Arts and Sciences, in Virtue and Learning, afford to Poets perpetual Subjects of Praiſe.

FINIS.

Addenda & Corrigenda.

PAGE 15. *l.* 3. *Voſſius*'s Definition is ſhort as it makes the Eſſence of Poetry conſiſt ſolely in Imitation.] *Add this Note,* The Author of *Obſervations on Poetry occaſioned by the late Poem on Leonidas*, p. 71. finds the ſame Fault with *Ariſtotle*; who "by this, ſays he, "excludes all deſcriptive Poetry; and accordingly he "(*Ariſtotle*) directs the epic poet to introduce his characters, and write in dialogue, as much as poſſible, for "this reaſon, that when the poet ſpeaks himſelf, he is "not an imitator. *Plato* has more juſtly diſtinguiſh'd, "that ſome kinds of Poetry conſiſt wholly in imitation, "as tragedy and comedy; ſome in narration only, where "the poet ſpeaks in his own perſon, as odes; whereas "ſome, as the epic, contain a mixture of both." For my Part, I cannot think it any great Violence put upon Words to allow that *Deſcription* or *Narration* is *Imitation*. It is certain *Ariſtotle* uſes the Word *Imitation* in this Senſe, c. 3. καὶ γὰρ οἱ τοῖς αὐτοῖς καὶ αὐτὰ μιμεῖσθαί φαίνται, ὅτε μὲν ἀπαγγέλλοντα, ἢ ἕτερόν τι γιγνόμενον, *A Poet may imitate the ſame Things either by Narration, or by aſſuming the Character of ſome other Perſon:* And c. 22, 23. he diſtinguiſhes περὶ τῆς ἐν τῷ μέτρῳ μιμήσεως, and περὶ τῆς διηγηματικῆς, between *Dramatic Imitation*, and *Narrative:* and c. 2, & 4. he mentions the *Dithyrambics* and *Nomi*, Hymns in Honour of *Bacchus* and *Apollo*, and other Odes, as Inſtances of Poetic Imitation. Now, I need not obſerve, that if in theſe Hymns and Odes, Actions, as *Dacier* contends, were *imitated* by Deſcription or Narration, other Things may likewiſe. Nay *Plato* himſelf has omitted *deſcriptive* Poetry, as well as *Ariſtotle*, if it is not included under *narrative*.

But ſtill, if it is, the ingenious Author will not allow it to be *Imitation*, upon the Authority of *Plato*.

Now

Now as to *Plato*, *Dan. Heinſius* has long ſince obſerv'd, that tho', with Dr. *Pemberton*, he ſometimes ſpeaks of *Imitation* as a *Species* of Poetry, yet at other times he agrees with *Ariſtotle*, in making it the *Genus*. In ſhort, theſe two Philoſophers are agreed, that All Poetry is Imitation; but Dramatic Imitation, or that which is ſupported by Dialogue, is more peculiarly ſo.

Next let us ſee if Dr. *Pemberton*'s own Account of Poetry will not lead us to think *Deſcription* to be *Imitation*. He obſerves, p. 75. *That it is the peculiar Office of the Poet*, in Oppoſition to the Proſe-writer, *to exhibit continually ſenſible* IMAGES *of things*. Now *Images* are ſurely *Likeneſſes* or *Imitations*; and whether theſe are the genuine Images of the Poet's Subject, or adventitious ones fetch'd in to illuſtrate it, ſtill 'tis all Imagery; *Imitation* is his diſtinguiſhing Character. Again, p. 98. he obſerves, *The language of comedy receives its poetic Air not by departing from the ordinary forms of ſpeech, but by keeping more cloſe to them.* So that where we almoſt loſe Sight of Poetry, the Traces of it are preſerved by Imitation. Upon the whole 1. we ſee *Plato* and *Ariſtotle* uſe Imitation in a larger Senſe than Dr. *Pemberton* was aware of; and 2. the Doctor naturally falls into the Sentiments of both, while he oppoſes one of them.

Voſſius, it ſeems, and *Dacier* go farther, and ſuppoſe that *Ariſtotle* makes *Poetry conſiſt in the Imitation of* ACTIONS *only*. But the Words, c. 2. as Dr. *Trapp* obſerves, very well bear another Senſe, ἐπειδὴ μιμοῦνται οἱ μιμούμενοι πράττοντας, &c. *Since Imitators*, or Poets, *imitate Actions*, i. e. as well as other things; or poſſibly thus, joining πράττοντας to μιμούμενοι, *ſince thoſe that imitate Actions are Imitators,—ſuch Actions*, he goes on, *muſt be either good or bad.*

As to *Dacier*, I cannot well make him conſiſtent with himſelf: *Ariſtotle*, ſays he, c. 2. rem. 1. *lays it down as an undoubted Principle, that* ALL *thoſe that imitate, imitate Actions; and indeed it is ſo, for there is nothing elſe but Actions which can be imitated.* And yet upon *Ariſtotle*'s ſaying that Muſic is Imitation, he obſerves, that *whatever employs means to ſhew and repreſent* ANY SUBJECT *as naturally as may be, whether it* DOES REALLY EXIST *or no, is called Imitation.* Does he by *Actions* above mean *Effects?*

Ariſtotle

Ariſtotle, it muſt be own'd, inſtances in Actions as the Objects of Poetic Imitation, being to treat of Epic and Dramatic Poetry particularly. But he aſcribes the Riſe of Poetry in general to the Deſire of Imitation, and the Pleaſure we take in comparing the Likeneſs of Copies with their Originals. And this Faculty ſurely is exerciſed not only in viewing the Deſcription of a Man, but of a Mountain; not only in repreſenting the Conflicts of Paſſion, but

A painted Meadow and a purling Stream.

P. 154. *l.* 10, 11. *r. thus*

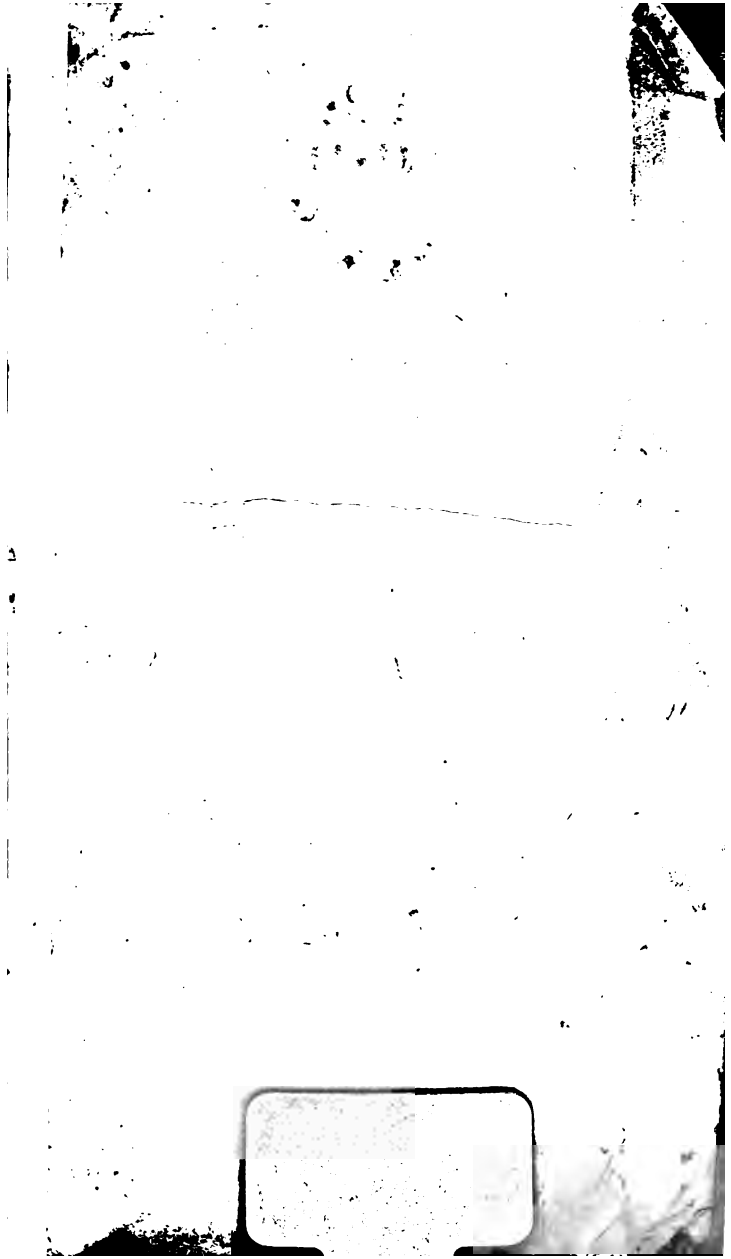
Tartuffe in *Engliſh* freely I reſign;
The Excrement is his, the Food was mine.

P. 303. *l.* 2. *add this Note*, I make no Doubt, but for ἐπαγγελίας we ſhould read with *Sylburgius* ἀπαγγελίας the former being never uſed for *Narration*, the latter more than once by *Ariſtotle*, as c. 2. ὅτε μὲν ἀπαγγέλλουσι, and c. 6. ἢ ἀπαγγελίαν τίνες

P. 333. *Note* † *change thus*] *Boſſu* diſtinguiſhes very clearly, and to the ſame Purpoſe with Dr. *Trapp*, between the Narration the Poet himſelf makes, and that which he repreſents the Hero to make. In the former View, the Action of the *Odyſſee* takes up Eight Years and ſix Months, and the *Æneid* almoſt ſeven Years. But in the latter, *Boſſu* reduces the *Odyſſey* to fifty eight Day's; and the *Æneis* either to a Year and ſomewhat more, or elſe to a ſingle Campaign, beginning where Dr. *Trapp* does. See *Boſſu* Book II. ch. xviii. and Book III. c. xii.

Juſt Publiſhed.

SELECTÆ e profanis Scriptoribus Hiſtoriæ, quibus admiſta ſunt varia honeſte vivendi Præcepta, ex iiſdem Scriptoribus deprompta. Editio altera.

Monſ. *Rollin*, in his *Method of ſtudying the Belles Lettres*, Vol. I, p. 84, concludes a very advantageous Character of this Work in the following Words:

"I know of no Book, which may be more uſeful, and at the "ſame time more agreeable to Youth. It contains excellent Prin"ciples of Morality, collected with great Order and Judgment, with "very affecting Paſſages of Hiſtory upon every Article."